

Morgan Stanley Institutional Fund

American Resilience Portfolio

INTERNATIONAL EQUITY TEAM

Performance Review

In the quarter period ending September 30, 2025, the Portfolio's I shares returned -2.72% (net of fees)¹, while the benchmark returned 8.12%.

Among the largest contributors to absolute performance during the third quarter were the cloud hyperscalers, **Alphabet** and **Microsoft**, which have benefited from accelerating enterprise demand for artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure and significant increases in cloud-related revenue, solid earnings from their cash-generative dominant platforms, and in the case of Alphabet, improving ad trends supporting strong revenue growth in its search and YouTube segments plus the favourable resolution of a key anti-monopoly regulatory case in the U.S. Elsewhere, **Thermo Fisher** rallied double digits after a challenged first half, as investor sentiment refocused on encouraging indications for its pipeline following management's adjustment to near-term organic growth targets. **AutoZone** also rerated following strong fourth quarter results which saw resilient top-line growth and an expanding domestic and international footprint, while **Oracle** contributed positively ahead of its sale from the portfolio in September.

The third quarter was strong for the index overall; however, the market's nervousness about generative AI disruption in the latter half applied a broad-brush concern to a wide range of data-rich businesses, without regard to important distinctions in industries and their underlying companies. This was demonstrated in software where there are concerns that generative AI tools, notably cheap coding and agents, could weaken companies' moats, as well as data-rich pockets of financials (e.g., exchanges and data providers) and industrials (e.g., professional services) due to fears that generative AI may be able to replicate companies' proprietary data. These concerns impacted the share price of a range of differentiated models with multi-layered defences against disruption, specifically, **FactSet**, **Constellation Software** and **Roper Technologies**, which were among the largest absolute detractors. Our view is that the portfolio's software companies, such as Constellation Software and Roper, are so much more than just coding. Roper is deeply entrenched in customer workflows, backed by the technical complexity of the multi-year buildout and stands to gain from generative AI by embedding it into its vertical software platforms. Equally, Constellation Software is a collection of small vertical niche businesses, buffered by its distribution; we think it should benefit from embedding generative AI into these businesses. As such, we remain confident in these companies' compounding ability. **Accenture** also detracted in the third quarter. The shares have been challenged this year due to cyclical headwinds and generative AI uncertainty. Fourth quarter results announced late in September were decent, with better-than-expected organic growth and a meaningful uptick in AI bookings; however, 2026 guidance remained below historical norms. Encouragingly, management offered some reassurance on the pricing impact of generative AI, which they expect to be "expansionary" rather than "deflationary," although this is something we continue to monitor. Given the relative lack of certainty, we reduced the **Accenture** position along with that of **FactSet**, recycling the capital into higher quality names which had also come under valuation pressure. Finally, despite reporting second quarter results in line with expectations in July, **Texas Instruments** underperformed as management's cautious guidance and fears that first half 2025 demand had been boosted by tariff pull-forward hurt sentiment.

In terms of relative performance, the impact of generative AI disruption fears is apparent when looking at stock selection and subsector performance. In information technology, our preferred software and services subsector was up just +3% (in USD terms) in the third quarter while semiconductors delivered a massive +18% and hardware an even higher +23%. In financials, the payments industry fell 5% and the exchanges and data providers dropped 6%, while banks (not held in the portfolio) returned +10%. In industrials, we are skewed to professional services (-4%), which significantly lagged capital goods (+7%). Sector allocation was also negative, primarily due to the consumer staples and financials overweight, and information technology underweight.

The impact of the portfolio's subsector exposure is also evident in the year-to-date performance. Since the mid-April lows, the market has been led by cyclical industries within sectors which the portfolio has either minimal or no exposure to, such as semiconductors, banks and capital goods, while those areas we do favour, described above, have significantly lagged the market. Although we would expect to trail the index to some extent in a strong up market given our defensive return profile, the portfolio's sector mix, coupled with some stock-specific mistakes most notably within health care, have impacted the degree of the relative underperformance. We have been decisive about taking action where our investment thesis has been challenged and we have high conviction in the ability of the current portfolio to potentially compound at double digits over time through the combination of high-single-digit earnings per share growth and dividends, backed by strong top-line growth.

¹ Source: Morgan Stanley Investment Management. Data as of September 30, 2025. Performance for other share classes will vary.

This document constitutes a commentary and does not constitute investment advice nor a recommendation to invest. The value of investments may rise as well as fall. Independent advice should be sought before any decision to invest.

NOT FDIC INSURED | OFFER NO BANK GUARANTEE | MAY LOSE VALUE | NOT INSURED BY ANY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY | NOT A DEPOSIT

Market Review

The S&P 500 Index posted another quarter of solid gains in the third quarter, with investor confidence helped by more-resilient-than-expected U.S. economic data and ongoing optimism around AI. The S&P 500 Index returned +3.6% in U.S. dollars in September and +8.0% in the third quarter. Looking at the performance pattern by sector: information technology was the clear leader in both the month (+7%) and quarter (+13%), although the mix of strong demand for AI infrastructure and the generative AI fears described above meant gains were skewed to the growthy semiconductors (+18%) and hardware (+23%) subsectors rather than software and services (+3%). Communication services also outpaced the market both on a month (+6%) and quarter (+12%) view, largely thanks to Alphabet, which returned nearly 40% as the company avoided a forced break-up ruling in U.S. federal court. For the third quarter overall, there were pockets of strength outside the AI-skewed leaders: consumer discretionary had a better quarter (+9%), propped up by strong demand for autos (+38%), while industrials saw gains of +5% helped by the capital goods area (+7%), while professional services (-4%) were distinctly weak. Similarly, within financials (+3% overall), banks (+10%) were far stronger than payments (-5%) and the exchanges and data providers (-6%), again due to generative AI fears. More generally, investor preference for growthier segments over companies with modest and predictable cash flows hurt consumer staples (-3%), while health care (+4%) was stronger, if still lagging the S&P 500.

Outlook

The Tug of War

We spoke last quarter about the sharp reversal in market direction and leadership following the market trough post the “Liberation Day” tariff announcements in early-April. The third quarter saw a continuation of that upward trajectory, with global equity markets returning +7%, taking year-to-date MSCI World Index performance to an impressive +17%, despite numerous remaining uncertainties in terms of policy and geopolitics. The MSCI World Index is now on over 20x forward earnings, with the S&P 500 Index at 23x.² These extended multiples are on forward earnings that are meant to grow by double-digits for the next two years on the back of margins improving even further from record highs. Indeed, when we consider what is priced into today’s historically high market valuations, the market is betting on a continuation of the vigorous AI boom and a macro backdrop strong enough to deliver the double-digit earnings growth, with confidence that easing policy and AI-linked productivity will keep margins elevated. In short, expectations are high. Yet, the record gold price reminds us that uncertainties linger.

This six-month growth-tilted cyclical rally leaves us with unprecedented underperformance of quality against the broader index, as demonstrated by the performance of the S&P 500 Quality Index vs. S&P 500 Index. We have only ever seen quality underperform to this degree in the run up to the tech-media-telecom bubble burst. In the past, periods in which quality has significantly underperformed have frequently been followed by a prolonged period of meaningful outperformance of quality vs. the broader market.

We see a tug of war within markets, between the bull argument that AI will be visibly transformational to corporate profitability in the near term and/or the U.S. economy sharply accelerates, and the bear argument where these high expectations are not met. The bear scenario may come from the scaled enterprise adoption of generative AI taking longer than expected, raising anxieties about the return on the hyperscalers’ massive investments or the macro environment not being strong enough to justify the double-digit earnings growth expectations. Our long-tenured team is also acutely aware of how painful it can be when elevated expectations reset downwards.

Taking data from the last 150 years, the market appears to be in its fourth “New Tech” era, with the associated extreme valuation, and the S&P 500 CAPE³ over two standard deviations above trend. Comparisons to the three previous episodes of extreme valuation, in the 1900s, the 1920s and most recently the dot-com bubble, highlight the risk of significant overall market drawdowns when market sentiment shifts (anything from a 15% to 50% drawdown). The most exposed areas suffer more heavily on the way down, while underappreciated segments get their turn in the sun; consumer staples in the dot-com crash, and potentially the supposed “AI victims” this time, be they in software or in data-rich financials and industrials.

While there are similarities to the over-exuberance seen during the internet “New Tech” era, we do see notable differences today: the companies at the centre of the boom are earning real money, and their earnings momentum remains strong, while their current price-to-earnings ratios, though high, are not remotely extreme compared with 1999. Another critical difference is that today’s massive hyperscaler capital expenditure is largely being self-funded from operational cash flow, allowing for continued and even expanded investment with limited dependence on external funding.

However, uncertainty remains. There is a paradox currently at the core of the generative AI boom. It has garnered an unprecedented mindshare among C-suites for a new technology and the potential is clear to anyone who has used it, but the scale adoption and value realisation among corporates has been very limited. This could drive a classic Gartner Hype Cycle, with a shift from the period

² Source for data cited in the Outlook commentary, unless otherwise stated: MSIM, FactSet, as of September 30, 2025.

³ CAPE: cyclically adjusted price-to-earnings ratio, a stock valuation measure usually applied to the S&P 500 Index.

of “Inflated Expectations” to the “Trough of Disillusionment” as implementation proves hard and drawn out, even if it is eventually successful and transformative. In addition, the macroeconomic position is unclear given the high levels of policy uncertainty, not least around the eventual effect of tariffs, and worldwide geopolitical risks. It is worth remembering that while growth is positive, the macroeconomic outlook remains modest, with U.S. growth expected around 1.5%-2% for both 2025 and 2026 and EAFE markets closer to 1%.

During the quarter, markets became increasingly preoccupied with the question of whether AI will disrupt, in particular, data-centred businesses. The initial reaction has been quite broad-based, with investors indiscriminately punishing nearly all companies perceived to have exposure to data regardless of differences in business models, competitive positioning or adaptability. We believe this blanket approach by the market is wrong as it ignores important differences between the industries and companies involved. We carefully examine both the potential vulnerability to AI disruption and the revenue and cost opportunities on a case-by-case basis.

There are some general principles behind our company-specific analysis. In our view, those data-rich businesses that avoid disruption are likely to control proprietary datasets that cannot be imitated by generative AI bots scraping the internet, or are likely to be deeply embedded into clients’ workflows or even core to whole ecosystems. On the positive side, they should have the financial and technical capacity to integrate AI into their offerings in a way that enhances client value and also utilise the technology to remove significant costs, be it in client relations or coding. In the case of RELX, held in our portfolios, we are already seeing generative AI technology combined with its proprietary data sets accelerating revenue growth in its legal division. SAP, another holding, is buffered from disruption by being deeply embedded into mission-critical operations, and by its well-established domain and industry expertise. Its Joule copilots and agents are potential sources of extra revenue, while generative AI innovation could speed clients’ lucrative transition to S/4 Hana, its next-generation enterprise resource planning system. It is precisely these sort of high quality, data-rich businesses we seek to own in our portfolio.

As the debate matures and the market develops a clearer view of which companies are truly vulnerable to disruption and which can harness AI as a competitive advantage, we expect to see much greater dispersion in returns across the sector. In the meantime, we see the broad-brush approach applied by the market as an opportunity to selectively upgrade some of our holdings in which some uncertainty exists on the impact of AI – where compounding babies have been chucked out with the disrupted bathwater.

In a market where investor “certainty” meets a very uncertain reality and valuations are stretched, we remain focused on companies we believe offer credible earnings per share growth, driven by strong revenue growth, which we consider a more reliable source of long-term compounding than supposed margin improvement. We believe our portfolio is set to deliver resilient top-line growth close to twice that of the index and is available at a free cash flow discount to the market not seen over the last decade, a very attractive proposition, particularly in relative terms.

Fund Facts

Inception Date	July 29, 2022
Minimum Initial Investment (\$)*	A Shares - 1,000
	I Shares - 1,000,000
Benchmark	S&P 500 Index
Class I expense ratio	Gross 21.08 %
	Net 0.70 %
Class A expense ratio	Gross 24.76 %
	Net 1.05 %

Where the net expense ratio is lower than the gross expense ratio, certain fees have been waived and/or expenses reimbursed. These waivers and/or reimbursements will continue for at least one year from the date of the applicable fund's current prospectus (unless otherwise noted in the applicable prospectus) or until such time as the fund's Board of Directors acts to discontinue all or a portion of such waivers and/or reimbursements. Absent such waivers and/or reimbursements, returns would have been lower. Expenses are based on the fund's current prospectus, in effect as of the date of this commentary. For information on the applicable fund's current fees and expenses, please see the fund's current prospectus.

* Share class availability may vary by platform. For more information, please visit the specified fund page on the website.

Performance (%)

As of September 30, 2025

	MTD	QTD	YTD	1 YR	3 YR	5 YR	10 YR	SINCE INCEPTION
Class I Shares at NAV	-2.24	-2.72	1.37	-1.44	13.54	--	--	7.29
Class A Shares at NAV	-2.25	-2.73	1.12	-1.70	13.18	--	--	6.93
Class A Shares (With Max 5.25% Sales Charge)	-7.41	-7.84	-4.16	-6.86	11.18	--	--	5.14
S&P 500 Index	3.65	8.12	14.83	17.60	24.94	--	--	18.17

Performance data quoted represents past performance, which is no guarantee of future results, and current performance may be lower or higher than the figures shown. For the most recent month end performance figures, please visit morganstanley.com/im. Investment returns and principal value will fluctuate and fund shares, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original cost.

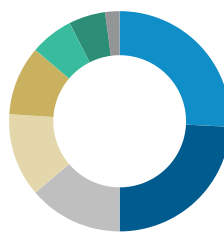
Returns are net of fees and assume the reinvestment of all dividends and income. They are compared to an unmanaged market index. Returns for less than one year are cumulative (not annualized). Performance for one year or more is based on average annual total returns. The returns are reported for Class I and A shares. Performance for other share classes will vary.

Please keep in mind that high double-digit returns are highly unusual and cannot be sustained. Investors should also be aware that these returns were primarily achieved during favorable market conditions.

Top Holdings (% of Total Net Assets)

	FUND	INDEX
Microsoft Corp	8.80	6.75
Alphabet Inc	5.07	4.47
Visa Inc	4.74	1.02
Texas Instruments Inc	4.38	0.29
Coca-Cola Co.	4.17	0.45
Procter & Gamble	4.01	0.63
Zoetis Inc	3.97	0.11
Arthur J Gallagher & Co.	3.95	0.14
Roper Technologies Inc	3.78	0.09
S&P Global Inc	3.61	0.27
Total	46.48	--

Sector Allocation (% of Total Net Assets)^



	FUND	INDEX
Financials	24.38	13.54
Information Technology	22.87	34.78
Industrials	13.01	8.29
Health Care	11.54	8.86
Consumer Staples	9.62	4.91
Consumer Discretionary	5.99	10.54
Communication Services	5.07	10.14
Energy	--	2.89
Materials	--	1.77
Real Estate	--	1.94
Utilities	--	2.35
Cash	1.97	--

^ May not sum to 100% due to rounding.

INDEX INFORMATION

The **S&P 500® Index** measures the performance of the large cap segment of the U.S. equities market, covering approximately 75% of the U.S. equities market. The Index includes 500 leading companies in leading industries of the U.S. economy.

The index is unmanaged and does not include any expenses, fees or sales charges. It is not possible to invest directly in an index. Any index referred to herein is the intellectual property (including registered trademarks) of the applicable licensor.

The **MSCI World Net Index** is a free float adjusted market capitalization weighted index that is designed to measure the

global equity market performance of developed markets. The term "free float" represents the portion of shares outstanding that are deemed to be available for purchase in the public equity markets by investors. The performance of the Index is listed in U.S. dollars and assumes reinvestment of net dividends. The index is unmanaged and does not include any expenses, fees or sales charges. It is not possible to invest directly in an index.

The **S&P 500 Quality Index** measures the performance of high quality stocks in the S&P 500, based on a quality score calculated from return on equity, accruals ratio and financial leverage ratio.

RISK CONSIDERATIONS

There is no assurance that a Portfolio will achieve its investment objective. Portfolios are subject to market risk, which is the possibility that the market values of securities owned by the Portfolio will decline and that the value of Portfolio shares may therefore be less than what you paid for them. Market values can change daily due to economic and other events (e.g. natural disasters, health crises, terrorism, conflicts and social unrest) that affect markets, countries, companies or governments. It is difficult to predict the timing, duration, and potential adverse effects (e.g. portfolio liquidity) of events. Accordingly, you can lose money investing in this Portfolio. Please be aware that this Portfolio may be subject to certain additional risks. Changes in the worldwide economy, consumer spending, competition, demographics and consumer preferences, government regulation and economic conditions may adversely affect **global franchise companies** and may negatively impact the strategy to a greater extent than if the strategy's assets were invested in a wider variety of companies. **ESG strategies** that incorporate impact investing and/or Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) factors could result in relative investment performance deviating from other strategies or broad market benchmarks, depending on whether such sectors or investments are in or out of favor in the market. As a result, there is no assurance ESG strategies could result in more favorable investment performance. In general, **equities securities'** values also fluctuate in response to activities specific to a company. Investments in **foreign markets** entail special risks such as currency, political, economic, market and liquidity risks. The risks of investing in **emerging market countries** are greater than risks associated with investments in foreign developed countries. Stocks of **small- and medium capitalization** companies entail special risks, such as limited product lines, markets and financial resources, and greater market volatility than securities of larger, more established companies. **Nondiversified portfolios** often invest in a more limited number of issuers. As such, changes in the financial condition or market value of a single issuer may cause greater volatility. **Derivative instruments** may disproportionately increase losses and have a significant impact on performance. They also may be subject to counterparty, liquidity, valuation, correlation and market risks. **Illiquid securities** may be more difficult to sell and value than publicly traded securities (liquidity risk).

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

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Please consider the investment objective, risks, charges and expenses of the fund carefully before investing. The prospectus contains this and other information about the fund. To obtain a prospectus (which includes the applicable fund's current fees and expenses, if different from those in effect as of the date of this commentary), download one at morganstanley.com/im or call 1-800-548-7786. Please read the prospectus carefully before investing.

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