

# WHITNEY

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of American Art  
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# PRESS RELEASE

## WHITNEY MUSEUM LAUNCHES MAJOR FREE ADMISSION INITIATIVE IN 2024: FREE ENTRY AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS EVERY FRIDAY NIGHT AND THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH



*The new programs—which will begin in January—significantly expand the Museum’s existing free and discounted admission offerings, which already includes free admission for everyone 18 and under. These programs aim to reduce barriers to entry and connect new and larger audiences to American art and artists.*

**New York, NY, December 14, 2023** — The Whitney Museum of American Art will offer free admission and special programming for visitors every Friday evening from 5–10 pm and on the second Sunday of every month beginning in 2024.

The new programs—called **Free Friday Nights** and **Second Sundays**—will kick off on January 12, 2024, and mark a significant expansion of the Whitney’s already robust suite of [free and discounted offerings](#). Offering free admission and special programming, the initiatives aim to reduce barriers to the Whitney and offer audiences unique, fun, and welcoming entry points. The programs all support the Museum in furthering its mission of celebrating contemporary American art and artists.

Free Friday Nights are made possible by three-year gifts from Whitney Trustee Jen Rubio and Stewart Butterfield, and Whitney Trustee Paul Arnhold and Wes Gordon.

Second Sundays are made possible by a three-year grant from the [Art Bridges Foundation's Access for All program](#), which supports increased access to museums across the country and fosters engagement with local communities by reducing common barriers to access.

"I'm thrilled that the Whitney is announcing its broadest and most generous free admission program in decades," said **Scott Rothkopf, the Alice Pratt Brown Director at the Whitney**. "We know that pricing can be a barrier to access and that our previous reduced admissions programs have not only been fully booked but have been enjoyed by younger, less affluent, and more diverse audiences. I'm incredibly grateful to our sponsors, Whitney Trustees Jen Rubio and Paul Arnhold, and the Art Bridges Foundation and Alice Walton. They understand deeply how connecting new audiences with art and ideas is meaningful to our whole society. I could think of no better way to inaugurate my tenure as Director than to share our vital and relevant program even more broadly."

"The Whitney Museum's commitment to free admission through its Second Sundays program aligns seamlessly with the vision of our Access for All initiative," said **Alice Walton, founder and board chair of Art Bridges Foundation**. "By reducing barriers to access, we aim to empower our museum partners across the country to deepen connections with their local communities and pave the way for all to experience the transformative power of American art." "We are thrilled to support the Whitney in bringing Free Friday Nights to life," said **Whitney Trustee Jen Rubio**. "I became a trustee at the Whitney because of the museum's mission to challenge culture, to bring together diversity of perspective, to encourage questioning and reflection. Free Friday Nights will further that mission: opening the doors to an even larger audience, most importantly one that is younger and more diverse. It is an honor to further the Whitney's vision and dedication to the community and we are grateful for Paul Arnhold and Wes Gordon's partnership in this initiative."

"We are so proud to support the Free Friday Nights program, an exciting initiative that aims to connect new visitors with the Museum, contemporary American art, and artists," said **Whitney Trustee Paul Arnhold**. "As Whitney Trustee, I believe so deeply in the Museum's mission and in the power of art to engage, inspire, ask important questions, share diverse perspectives, and open doors of thought and creativity. Free Friday Nights will encourage more people to have these experiences, and that is a wonderful and important thing. I thank the Whitney's Alice Pratt Brown Director Scott Rothkopf for his vision, and Jen Rubio and Stewart Butterfield for their leadership and partnership."

Free Friday Nights, launching on January 12, will offer free admission to the Museum from 5–10 PM every Friday. The evenings will offer special programs and music, with food and drinks available at the Museum's new restaurant, Frenchette Bakery at the Whitney. The Whitney will be an ideal destination for happy hours and date nights and will play a larger role in the evening energy of the Meatpacking District.

Second Sundays, launching on January 14, will offer free all-day admission to visitors and special programming for families and beyond. Every second Sunday of the month, visitors can enjoy all-ages artmaking activities, tours, classes, and other special events tied to the exhibitions on view at the Whitney or to significant community events, like Earth Day and Pride Month.

The inaugural installment will take place on Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend and will focus on celebrating Black artists whose work is represented in the Whitney's collections and in current exhibitions, including *Henry Taylor: B Side*.



Other exhibitions on view during the January launch of both programs include *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten: The Art of Harry Smith*, *Inheritance*, *Ruth Asawa Through Line*, and *Natalie Ball: bilwi naats Ga'niipci*. The Museum's permanent collection exhibitions, featuring artists such as Edward Hopper, Kara Walker, Georgia O'Keeffe, Kevin Beasley, Faith Ringgold, Lee Krasner, Jasper Johns, Alexander Calder, Jacob Lawrence, Carrie Mae Weems, Andrea Carlson, and Clarissa Tossin, will also be on view.

More details on upcoming Free Friday Nights and Second Sundays programs will be available at [whitney.org/free-days-and-nights](https://whitney.org/free-days-and-nights).

While admission is free for these programs, tickets are still required, as capacity is limited. Advanced tickets are strongly encouraged; tickets will go on sale in early January. Guests planning to visit the Museum during Free Friday Nights or Second Sundays can enjoy sweet and savory treats baked-on-premises at the Museum's newly opened ground-floor restaurant Frenchette Bakery at the Whitney, which features the new commission *New Poetry* by artist Rashid Johnson.

The Free Friday Nights and Second Sundays programs expand the Whitney's [full suite of free and discounted offerings](#) in place to ensure the Museum is welcoming to all visitors. Always-on offerings include:

- Free admission for kids and teens 18 and under
- Free admission for active military and veterans
- Free admission for SNAP/EBT cardholders
- Free admission for IDNYC cardholders on select dates

- Discounted admission for students
- Discounted admission for seniors
- Discounted admission for visitors with disabilities
- Free admission for all to the Whitney's Lobby Gallery
- Free admission and discounts for Members

The Whitney has already explored free admission days to great success with amplified programming on select occasions in recent years and has consistently seen strong attendance and new visitors. On April 22, 2023, for example, the Whitney held an Earth Day celebration with free admission. The event sold out with the majority of tickets reserved by first-time visitors to the Whitney. Free Open Studio art programs for families—held every Saturday—featured artist Gabriela Salazar, whose work was highlighted in the show *no existe un mundo poshuracán: Puerto Rican Art in the Wake of Hurricane Maria*, and saw attendance nearly triple over an average Saturday.

The most recent example of a free admission day was West Side Fest on September 30, a celebration of New York City's newest vibrant cultural destination, the community around the Whitney, which is also home to the High Line, Little Island, newly opened Gansevoort Peninsula, The Shed, Hudson River Park, Poster House, and more. The Museum sold out that day, with 75% of visitors coming from New York City and one of the most well-attended Open Studio artmaking sessions in the program's history. The neighborhood saw over 50,000 visitors that day, connecting new audiences with art and culture.

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## PROGRAM SUPPORT

Free Friday Nights are generously supported by Jen Rubio and Stewart Butterfield and Paul Arnhold and Wes Gordon.

Generous support for Second Sundays is provided by Art Bridges Foundation's Access for All program.



ACCESS  
FOR ALL

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## ABOUT THE WHITNEY

The Whitney Museum of American Art, founded in 1930 by the artist and philanthropist Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney (1875–1942), houses the foremost collection of American art from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Mrs. Whitney, an early and ardent supporter of modern American art, nurtured groundbreaking artists when audiences were still largely preoccupied with the Old Masters. From her vision arose the Whitney Museum of American Art, which has been championing the most innovative art of the United States for ninety years. The core of the

Whitney’s mission is to collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit American art of our time and serve a wide variety of audiences in celebration of the complexity and diversity of art and culture in the United States. Through this mission and a steadfast commitment to artists, the Whitney has long been a powerful force in support of modern and contemporary art and continues to help define what is innovative and influential in American art today.

### **Whitney Museum Land Acknowledgment**

The Whitney is located in Lenapehoking, the ancestral homeland of the Lenape. The name Manhattan comes from their word Mannahatta, meaning “island of many hills.” The Museum’s current site is close to land that was a Lenape fishing and planting site called Sapponckanikan (“tobacco field”). The Whitney acknowledges the displacement of this region’s original inhabitants and the Lenape diaspora that exists today.

As a museum of American art in a city with vital and diverse communities of Indigenous people, the Whitney recognizes the historical exclusion of Indigenous artists from its collection and program. The Museum is committed to addressing these erasures and honoring the perspectives of Indigenous artists and communities as we work for a more equitable future. To read more about the Museum’s Land Acknowledgment, [visit the Museum’s website](#).

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## **MUSEUM VISITOR INFORMATION**

The Whitney Museum of American Art is located at 99 Gansevoort Street between Washington and West Streets, New York City. Public hours are Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 10:30 am–6 pm; Friday, 10:30 am–10 pm; and Saturday and Sunday, 11 am–6 pm. Closed Tuesday. Member-only hours are: Saturday and Sunday, 10:30–11 am. Visitors eighteen years and under and Whitney members: FREE.

**Image credit:** Photographs by Filip Wolak

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