

# WHITNEY

Whitney Museum  
of American Art  
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# PRESS RELEASE

## WHITNEY MUSEUM CELEBRATED EDGES OF AILEY WITH LIVE MUSIC, DANCE, AND MORE DURING FREE SECOND SUNDAYS ON OCTOBER 13



*NYC Cultural Affairs Commissioner Laurie Cumbo joined the Whitney Museum's celebration of dance, music, and art with free Alvin Ailey-inspired programs during Free Second Sundays!*

*Xavier Riddle, star of the PBS KIDS® show Xavier Riddle and the Secret Museum, also made a guest appearance at the Museum.*

**New York, NY, October 15, 2024** — The Whitney Museum welcomed **over 6,500 visitors of all ages with free admission and Alvin Ailey-inspired activities** this past weekend on Sunday, October 13. This was the first chance to experience [Edges of Ailey](#), the once-in-a-lifetime exhibition exploring art, dance, history, and music through the lens of visionary artist and choreographer Alvin Ailey, during one of the Museum's [Free Second Sundays](#). The Whitney and AILEY hosted **free West African dance classes led by Maguette Camara**, faculty member at The Ailey School and Ailey Extension instructor, and **live drumming on Gansevoort Street** in front of the Museum, which was closed to traffic for the events. **NYC Cultural Affairs Commissioner Laurie Cumbo** also stopped by to join the celebratory dance classes and enjoy music performances by Jazz at Lincoln Center in the Whitney's theater!



**Jazz at Lincoln Center** performed a concert exploring the music that inspired Alvin Ailey's iconic works—from spirituals to the blues—guiding audience members through the musical influences that shaped Ailey's groundbreaking approach to dance and choreography.

There were screenings of an ***Xavier Riddle and the Secret Museum*** episode featuring an animated Alvin Ailey as a kid, followed by **sketch-along sessions to learn about animation drawing with illustrator Christopher Eliopoulos**, co-creator of the best-selling *Ordinary People Change the World* book series along with Brad Meltzer, which was adapted to the PBS KIDS® show, *Xavier Riddle and the Secret Museum*. **Special guest Xavier Riddle surprised fans at the Whitney** and took photos with visitors during the day. Museumgoers also had a chance to enter a raffle to win **Xavier Riddle prizes** and bring home **a replica of a one-of-a-kind piece of artwork** by Chris Eliopoulos featuring Alvin Ailey at Whitney Museum.



Other programs included **figure drawing sessions on the terrace** with live models influenced by Ailey's iconic choreography and **drawing in the grove surrounded by the indoor citrus trees** installed in the current exhibition [\*Survival Piece #5: Portable Orchard\*](#). All-ages artmaking programs, *Edges of Ailey* exhibition tours, and story times with the **New York Public Library** were also offered throughout the day.



### **Free Admission Offerings at the Whitney**

Free Second Sundays at the Whitney help connect more people to the Museum and its mission of celebrating contemporary American art and artists. Second Sundays is made possible by a generous 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 focusing on common barriers to access. The program and another Whitney initiative, [Free Friday Nights](#), both aim to reduce barriers to access, removing admission fees and offering programs that are entry points for anyone interested in visiting.

Photo and video assets from previous Free Friday Nights and Second Sundays at the Whitney can be found at [whitney.org/press/free-days-and-nights](https://whitney.org/press/free-days-and-nights).

### **Edges of Ailey Exhibition, Dance Classes, and Performance Tickets**

Timed tickets for the in-gallery exhibition [Edges of Ailey](#), on view September 25, 2024–February 9, 2025, are currently available at [whitney.org/admission](https://whitney.org/admission). From October 16 to 25, the Whitney will host Ailey dance classes led by instructors from The Ailey School, Ailey Extension, and more. Tickets to dance classes are available at [whitney.org/events](https://whitney.org/events). Performance tickets are also available for purchase on [whitney.org](https://whitney.org) and include same-day access to the exhibition. Performances take place in the Museum's theater, and space is limited. More exhibition, dance class, and performance information can be found on [whitney.org/exhibitions/edges-of-ailey](https://whitney.org/exhibitions/edges-of-ailey).

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## **PRESS CONTACT**

For press materials and image requests, please visit our press site at [whitney.org/press](https://whitney.org/press) or contact:

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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 Acknowledgement, [visit the Museum's website](#).

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## ABOUT AILEY

Founded by Alvin Ailey in 1958 and forged during a pivotal moment in the civil rights movement, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater uplifts the African American experience while transcending

boundaries of race, faith, and nationality with its universal humanity. Recognized as a vital “American Cultural Ambassador to the World,” it is one of the most acclaimed dance companies worldwide having performed in more than seventy countries on six continents. The AILEY organization also includes Ailey II (1974), a second performing company of emerging young dancers and innovative choreographers; The Ailey School (1969), one of the most extensive dance training programs in the world; Ailey Arts In Education & Community Programs (1992), which brings dance into a wide range of classrooms and communities of all ages, and lives of people of all ages; and Ailey Extension (2005), offering dance and fitness classes to the general public, which began with the opening of AILEY’s permanent home in New York City—The Joan Weill Center for Dance—the nation’s largest building dedicated to dance. For more information, visit [alvinailey.org](http://alvinailey.org).

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater returns to New York City Center December 4 - January 5, with its annual, five-week holiday season celebrating Legacy in Motion. The Company’s extraordinary dancers will bring to life world premieres and new productions by a number of choreographers for whom Alvin Ailey paved the way, including the 25th anniversary of Ronald K. Brown’s blockbuster *Grace*, a rapturous work in which the secular and sacred meet, connecting African and American dance. Tickets on sale September 10. A national tour to over 20 cities will follow, February – May 2025. For further info, email: [aileypress@alvinailey.org](mailto:aileypress@alvinailey.org)

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## 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, 10:30 am–6 pm. Closed Tuesday. Visitors eighteen years and under and Whitney members: FREE. The Museum offers FREE admission and special programming for visitors of all ages every Friday evening from 5–10 pm and on the second Sunday of every month.

### Image credit:

Lead image: West African Dance Classes led by Maguette Camara, faculty member at The Ailey School and Ailey Extension instructor, at the Whitney Museum, October 13, 2024. Photograph by Filip Wolak

From left to right: NYC Cultural Affairs Commissioner Laurie Cumbo and Whitney Museum Director Scott Rothkopf at Free Second Sundays at the Whitney. Photograph by Nora Gomez-Strauss; Jazz at Lincoln Center performing at the Whitney Museum, October 13, 2024. Photograph by Filip Wolak; Xavier Riddle visiting Free Second Sundays at the Whitney Museum, October 13, 2024. Photograph by Filip Wolak

From left to right: West African Dance Classes led by Maguette Camara, faculty member at The Ailey School and Ailey Extension instructor, at the Whitney Museum, October 13, 2024. Photograph by Filip Wolak; Dancers from Ailey Extension modeling at figure drawing on the Whitney Museum terrace, October 13, 2024. Photograph by Filip Wolak

From left to right: Visitors in *Edges of Ailey* at Free Second Sundays at the Whitney. Photograph by Filip Wolak; Dancers from Ailey Extension modeling at figure drawing on the Whitney Museum terrace, October 13, 2024. Photograph by Filip Wolak; Free Second Sundays at the Whitney. Photograph by Filip Wolak

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