

WHITNEY

Whitney Museum
of American Art
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PRESS RELEASE

ENJOY PERFORMANCES, DANCE CLASSES, ARTIST-LED PROGRAMS, AND MORE DURING FREE FRIDAY NIGHTS AND FREE SECOND SUNDAY AT THE WHITNEY MUSEUM



July is full of free, fun summer events at the Whitney, including World Cup-inspired programs, a Free Friday Night with Blooms by Play-Doh, and the return of the annual West Side Fest.

New York, NY, July 1, 2026 — The Whitney Museum of American Art is offering **free admission, performances, special programs, exhibition tours, music,** and much more during [Free Friday Nights](#) and the July edition of [Free Second Sundays](#). [West Side Fest](#) returns July 10–12 for its fourth annual edition, and the Whitney invites visitors to take part in three days of festivities. West Side Fest weekend at the Whitney begins with a special edition of Free Friday Night with *Blooms by Play-Doh* featuring an adult artmaking experience rooted in self-expression and joyful discovery. The weekend will also include [Whitney Biennial 2026](#) performances, artmaking programs with Biennial artists Ignacio Gatica and Taína H. Cruz, and a poster-making activity with artist Rich Tu celebrating the [World Cup at the Whitney](#). Coinciding with the World Cup Final, museum visitors can join a free Samba dance class with an Ailey Extension instructor. There's no better way to celebrate summer than gathering with friends and family at the Whitney Museum!

Friday, July 3

From **5–10 pm**, all visitors can enjoy **free admission, art, drinks, and city views** during Free Friday Nights at the Whitney. Artist **Rich Tu**, designer of the official FIFA World Cup 2026™ New York New Jersey Host City Poster, created a **poster activity guide** for the Whitney that invites participants to consider and explore themes of community, culture, and team spirit. Inspired by the activity guide, visitors of all ages can participate in a [World Cup Poster Studio](#) from **6:30–9:30 pm** in the **third-floor Artspace**.



Friday, July 10

The Whitney is kicking off West Side Fest with a **special Free Friday Night with the Play-Doh brand!** In addition to **free admission** from **5–10 pm**, visitors will enjoy [Artmaking with Blooms by Play-Doh](#) happening in the **third-floor theater** from **5–9:30 pm**. Through a hands-on activity inspired by the natural world, visitors are invited to slow down, engage with the process of making and create a unique take-home piece of their own.

Earlier in the evening there will be an [Open Studio for Teens with artist Ignacio Gatica](#) from **4–6 pm**. Teens are invited to join Gatica in experimenting with photography and creative image-making to explore how visual storytelling can capture personal experiences, spark dialogue, and deepen connections to the world around them. From **5:30–6:30 pm**, younger adult visitors can participate in [Art + You: Gallery Conversations for Younger Adults](#) in the **fifth-floor galleries**. Facilitated by a Whitney Museum Educator, this session invites visitors to meet new people and join a conversation about Malcom Peacock's sculptural installation in the 2026 Whitney Biennial.

At **6 pm**, visitors can join a [Queer History Walk](#) throughout the neighborhood. From the Hudson River piers to the clubs, the free walking tours explore the rich queer history of the Whitney's neighborhood, bringing visitors to select historical sites that once provided a place to find and create queer community.

Debuting during West Side Fest, Gabriela Ruiz's [Exive II](#) activates **Gansevoort Street in front of the Museum's main entrance**, engaging a forklift as her partner and recasting an industrial machine as an instrument of power, visibility, and grace. Commissioned by the Whitney for the 2026 Biennial, the new performance will take place at **6 pm** and **7:30 pm**. For *Exive II*, a forklift, built for cargo, for weight, for work, becomes Ruiz's partner, lifting her into the air with a slow, deliberate tenderness that feels both perilous and reverent.

Sunday, July 12

On Sunday, July 12, the Whitney is offering **free admission** from **10:30 am–6 pm** for all visitors for the July edition of Free Second Sunday. From **11 am–3 pm** in the **third-floor theater**, artists of all ages can [make their own artworks with artist Taina H. Cruz](#). Graffiti is a major inspiration for Cruz's paintings and drawings, including those she created onsite on one of the Whitney's fifth-floor gallery walls for the current Whitney Biennial. From **11 am–1 pm** in the **third-floor Artspace**, visitors can contribute to a [collaborative magnetic mosaic](#) inspired by artist Dyani White Hawk's *Nourish*, a site-specific installation on the eighth floor. White Hawk used thousands of handmade ceramic tiles to create the work and her art draws from Lakota traditions of beadwork, painting, and quillwork, a form of embroidery using porcupine quills. From **11 am–2 pm** on the **fifth-floor terrace**, visitors are invited to spend time observing and [sketching the New York City skyline](#) with the drawing materials provided. Participants can also spend time looking closer at Kelly Akashi's sculpture *Monument (Altadena)*, which is on view in the outdoor gallery as part of *Whitney Biennial 2026*.

Artist Rich Tu, designer of the official FIFA World Cup 2026™ New York New Jersey Host City Poster, will be at the Whitney for [a special artist-led poster-making and wheatpasting program](#). Hosted in collaboration with [Poster House](#), the program will take place from **2–5 pm** and is open to all ages. Participants are invited to create their own poster designs and explore themes of community, culture, and team spirit.



Friday, July 17

In addition to **free admission from 5–10 pm**, visitors can enjoy music, dance, and more during Free Friday Nights at the Whitney. At **6:30 pm** in the **lobby**, dancers of all ages and experience levels are invited to join a [free Samba dance class](#) led by **Ailey Extension instructor Quênia Ribeiro**. Visitors can also participate in a [World Cup Poster Studio](#) from **6:30–9:30 pm** in the **third-floor Artspace** inspired by artist Rich Tu, designer of the official FIFA World Cup 2026™ New York New Jersey Host City Poster. From **6:30–10 pm**, visitors will be immersed with music by [DJ JHN SWN](#) in the **lobby**. John Swan (JHN SWN) is a NYC-based DJ, producer and turntablist for the live band West Division known for his artistic blending of Funk, Soul, House, and global dance music while honoring his foundations rooted in Hip Hop/BBoy culture.

Friday, July 24 and Friday, July 31

Offering **free admission from 5–10 pm**, the Whitney's Free Friday Nights features **art, drinks, city views, music**, and more. The latest information about Free Friday Nights programming is always available on whitney.org.

Ongoing Exhibition Tours

A variety of free exhibition tours led by Whitney educators, ranging from family-focused to 15-minute tours, are offered during Free Friday Nights and Free Second Sundays. For further details on upcoming tours, please visit [whitney.org/events](https://www.whitney.org/events).

While general admission to the Whitney is free every Friday from 5–10 pm and all day on Sunday, July 12, **tickets are still required, and capacity is limited. Advance booking is strongly recommended, and tickets can be reserved at [whitney.org/admission](https://www.whitney.org/admission).**

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PROGRAM SUPPORT

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ACCESS
FOR ALL

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 Saponckanikan ("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](#).

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 twenty-five 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 Side Fest 2025 at the Whitney Museum. Photograph by Filip Wolak

Left to right: Rich Tu. Photograph by Kareem Black; Mixtape Vol. 5 at Free Friday Nights, June 12, 2026. Photograph by Filip Wolak

Left to right: Free Second Sunday, May 10, 2026. Photograph by Filip Wolak; Free Friday Night, February 27, 2026. Photograph by Summer Surgent-Gough

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