

WHITNEY

Whitney Museum
of American Art
Press Office

99 Gansevoort Street
New York, NY 10014

pressoffice@whitney.org
(212) 570-3633

PRESS RELEASE

WHITNEY MUSEUM CELEBRATES WEST SIDE FEST WITH FREE ADMISSION, SPECIAL PROGRAMS, AND PERFORMANCES FOR VISITORS OF ALL AGES!



In celebration of West Side Fest, the Whitney is offering free admission, Biennial performances, artist-led programs, and more, including a special Free Friday Night with Blooms by Play-Doh.

New York, NY, July 8, 2026 — The Whitney Museum of American Art invites visitors to [West Side Fest](#) this weekend! Returning July 10–12, West Side Fest coincides with the Whitney's [Free Friday Night](#) and [Free Second Sunday](#), offering free admission on Friday night and all day on Sunday, artist-led programs, live performances, artmaking activities, neighborhood walking tours, and more to New Yorkers and visitors of all ages. The festivities begin with a **special edition of Free Friday Night hosted by Blooms by Play-Doh** featuring an **adult artmaking experience** rooted in self-expression and joyful discovery. Inspired by the natural world, the hands-on program allows participants to slow down and engage with the process of creating. 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](#).

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.



Saturday, July 11

On July 11, visitors can explore the current shows on view or join guided exhibition tours led by Whitney Educators, which include [tours of Whitney Biennial 2026](#) at **11 am, 1 pm, and 2 pm** and a [tour of "Untitled" \(America\)](#) at **12 pm**. Visitors looking to dive deeper into an artwork will enjoy [A Closer Look: Guided Close-Looking Through Dialogue](#) taking place at **3 pm** in the **seventh-floor galleries**. Participants will have the chance to slow down and discover highlights

from “Untitled” (America). Guided by a Museum docent, each forty-five-minute session focuses on a single work of art or explores a connection between two works.

The Whitney will also present a live show of [Doomscroll](#), a podcast by Joshua Citarella that explores online culture and politics in the 21st century. This episode of Doomscroll is presented as part of *Whitney Biennial 2026* and features Citarella in conversation with political writer Bhaskar Sunkara at **12:30 pm** in the **third-floor theater**. This program requires an additional ticket, and tickets can be purchased on [whitney.org](#).



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 Taína 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.

Please visit [whitney.org/west-side-fest-2026](#) for more information about the Whitney’s West Side Fest offerings. While general admission to the Whitney is free on Friday, July 10 from 5–10 pm and on Sunday, July 12 from 10:30 am–6 pm, **tickets are still required, and capacity is limited. Advance booking is strongly recommended, and Museum tickets can be reserved at [whitney.org/admission](#).**

PRESS CONTACT

For press materials and image requests, please visit our press site at whitney.org/press or contact:

Meghan Ferrucci, Senior Publicist

Whitney Museum of American Art

(212) 671-8346

Meghan_Ferrucci@whitney.org

Whitney Press Office

whitney.org/press

(212) 570-3633

pressoffice@whitney.org

PROGRAM SUPPORT

Major support for Free 25 and Under is provided by Susan and John Hess and Julie Mehretu. Significant support is provided by Judy Hart Angelo.

Major support for Free Friday Nights is provided by Jen Rubio and Stewart Butterfield and Paul Arnhold and Wes Gordon. Significant support is provided by Leslie Bluhm and David Helfand, and the Brown Foundation Inc., of Houston.

Major support for Free Second Sundays is provided by Art Bridges Foundation's Access for All program. Significant support is provided by Julie and Doug Ostrover.



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 Acknowledgement, [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. Photograph by Filip Wolak

Left to right: Free Second Sunday, June 14, 2026. Photograph by Filip Wolak; Free Friday Night, March 6, 2026. Photograph by Summer Surgent-Gough; Installation view of *Whitney Biennial 2026* (Whitney Museum of American Art, March 8–August 2026). Malcolm Peacock, *Five of them were hers and she carved shelters with windows into the backs of their skulls*, 2024. Photograph by Gus Powell

Left to right: Free Second Sunday, June 14, 2026. Photograph by Filip Wolak

###