

WHITNEY

Whitney Museum
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PRESS RELEASE

THE WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART AND VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY LAUNCH PARTNERSHIP TO EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS AND BROADER COMMUNITY



This new collaboration opens doors to internships, scholarly programming, faculty collaboration, alumni engagement, public events, and more.

New York, NY, September 14, 2026 — The Whitney Museum of American Art and Vanderbilt University announce an innovative multi-year partnership providing expanded opportunities for Vanderbilt students, faculty, and staff to engage with the Museum through internships, classes, academic collaboration, research, professional exchange, and public programming. Made possible through philanthropic support, the partnership brings together two institutions with long-standing commitments to education, and cultural engagement, uniquely enabled by the proximity and shared community of Vanderbilt University–New York City’s campus, located in Manhattan’s Chelsea neighborhood less than a mile from the Whitney Museum.

For the Whitney, the partnership advances a longstanding commitment to access, education, and engagement, particularly for young audiences, while strengthening its role as a cultural anchor on Manhattan’s West Side and within New York’s downtown arts community. The Museum already works to expand access for New York’s university communities, including

through free admission for students and staff at CUNY, NYU, Pratt Institute, and the School of Visual Arts, alongside free admission for all visitors ages 25 and under.

By welcoming Vanderbilt students, faculty, alumni, and scholars into the life of the Museum, this new multi-pronged collaboration will create exciting opportunities for learning and exchange, particularly among the next generation of artists, scholars, and cultural leaders. The partnership will also help to enrich the Whitney community through access to Vanderbilt's research and scholarship in the arts, history, social sciences, and other key sectors.

"The Whitney is thrilled to welcome Vanderbilt as a new neighbor to one of the greatest arts districts anywhere in the world," said **Scott Rothkopf, the Alice Pratt Brown Director of the Whitney Museum of American Art**. "This collaboration provides a new reciprocal model for how a museum can partner with a university community, including students, faculty, artists, alumni, and our community. We look forward to building a robust and lasting relationship between our institutions that expands Vanderbilt's access to the arts and artists in New York City and brings new ideas and perspectives into the Whitney from Vanderbilt's areas of academic excellence."



Vanderbilt University's New York City campus in Chelsea.

The collaboration comes just weeks after Vanderbilt welcomed the first class of students to its New York City campus and marks an important milestone in the University's continued investment in the arts. This partnership builds on a series of recent initiatives, including Vanderbilt's participation in the Venice Biennale and the continued growth of its New York City campus. Together with the forthcoming Jen-Hsun and Lori Huang College of Art, Architecture and Design at Vanderbilt's San Francisco campus, these efforts expand opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, creative engagement, and public programming across the University.

"This powerful collaboration with the Whitney represents the bold, mission-driven approach that defines Vanderbilt's commitment to the arts," **Provost C. Cybele Raver** said. "By bringing the Vanderbilt community together with one of the nation's premier cultural institutions, we're creating opportunities for experiential learning, research and creative engagement that neither institution could offer on its own. This is a meaningful step in our continued investment in the arts that will open new doors for years to come."

The partnership honors a distinctive historical connection between the two institutions. Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, artist, patron, and founder of the Whitney Museum, was the great-granddaughter of Cornelius Vanderbilt, who founded Vanderbilt University in 1873. An early and ardent supporter of modern American artists at a time when their work received little institutional recognition, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney founded the Museum in 1930 to provide artists with opportunities to exhibit their work and to ensure that the art of the United States would be collected, studied, and celebrated. Nearly a century later, the new collaboration carries that connection forward by creating opportunities for a new generation of students, scholars, artists, and audiences.

A central component of the partnership will be ongoing intellectual exchange between students, staff, faculty, and leadership across the two institutions. Vanderbilt students will have opportunities to pursue internships at the Whitney; participate in classes led by Museum educators both at the Whitney and on Vanderbilt's New York City campus; attend public programs; and engage directly with the Museum's exhibitions, collection, artists, curators, and staff. Faculty and scholars will also have new opportunities to collaborate with colleagues at the Whitney. The partnership will provide alumni engagement, public events, and programs bringing together the broader Vanderbilt and Whitney communities.



"Through this innovative partnership, Vanderbilt students, faculty, and staff will gain wide access to the Whitney—from internships to academic collaboration, classes, research, and public programming," said **Manhattan Borough President Brad Hoylman-Sigal**. "I'm grateful to Whitney Board Chair Fern Kaye Tessler, Board President Anne-Cecilie Engell Speyer, and Alice Pratt Brown Director Scott Rothkopf, as well as Vanderbilt-NYC's Executive Director of Operations and Engagement James Kellerhouse, for collaborating to deliver an enriching educational experience for the new Vanderbilt community members now calling Chelsea home."

"The Whitney Museum is one of the great cultural institutions of New York City, and we are thrilled to welcome Vanderbilt University to its new home in Chelsea," said **New York State Senator Erik Bottcher**. "This partnership brings together two extraordinary institutions and creates exciting new opportunities for students, faculty, artists, and our broader community to learn from one another. It's exactly the kind of collaboration we hoped to see as Vanderbilt establishes roots in Chelsea, further strengthening the neighborhood as a center for education,

arts, culture, and creativity.”

“The Whitney Museum has long been one of the defining cultural institutions of Chelsea and a vital part of New York’s arts community,” said **New York State Assemblymember Tony Simone**. “This partnership with Vanderbilt is a wonderful opportunity for the Whitney to deepen its commitment to education and access while opening its doors to a new generation of students, artists, and scholars. I’m excited to see the Whitney continue to build connections across our neighborhood and strengthen its role as a cultural anchor on the West Side.”

“I am excited to welcome Vanderbilt to Chelsea and see their partnership with the Whitney take shape,” said **New York City Council Member Carl Wilson**. “The Whitney is such an important part of our neighborhood, and giving the Vanderbilt students and staff the chance to experience everything the museum has to offer is a great way to connect them with their new home in New York. Partnerships like this help create closer bonds between our neighborhood institutions and those that live here, and I look forward to seeing all that this collaboration will offer our community.”

Inaugural Event

The partnership’s inaugural event will take place on November 10 and feature a panel discussion with emerging artists. This event offers the Vanderbilt and Whitney communities their first opportunity to come together through this collaboration. [More information on how to register is available here](#). Additional programs and initiatives will be announced in the coming months.

PRESS CONTACT

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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](#).

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: Photograph by Max Touhey

Left to right: Photograph courtesy Vanderbilt University

Left to right: Installation view of *The Whitney’s Collection: Selections from 1900 to 1965* (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, June 28, 2019–May 1, 2025). Edward Hopper, *Soir Bleu*, 1914. Artwork © 2025 Heirs of Josephine N. Hopper/Licensed by Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photograph by Filip Wolak; Installation view of *“Untitled” (America)* (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, July 5, 2025–). Robert Henri, *Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney*, 1916. Photograph by David Tufino

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