

Harvard Art Museums

Fogg Museum
Busch-Reisinger Museum
Arthur M. Sackler Museum

Press Release

Harvard Art Museums Announce New Free Admission Policy for All Visitors



Harvard Art Museums, view from Harvard Yard. Photo: Zak Jensen; Courtesy of the Harvard Art Museums.

Cambridge, MA
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The Harvard Art Museums today announce a new free admission policy for all visitors, effective immediately. The new policy represents a significant expansion of free access to the museums' collections, exhibitions, and research for public audiences. The museums are open to visitors Tuesday through Sunday, 10am to 5pm (except major holidays), and during monthly Harvard Art Museums at Night programs on the last Thursday evening of each month.

This new initiative is made possible by a generous contribution from the Estate of David Rockefeller and support from the Office of the President at Harvard University.

"Art is for everyone, and the Harvard Art Museums will now be free to all visitors," said Lawrence S. Bacow, President of Harvard University. "This initiative ensures that every visitor to our campus will now have the opportunity to view and engage with the phenomenal collections in our care at the Harvard Art Museums."

The museums have a long history of providing free admission to a significant percentage of visitors, including the Harvard community, students from all universities and colleges worldwide, youth under 18, Cambridge residents, Massachusetts residents on Saturday mornings, and many others. Over the past 18 months, two newer initiatives created by the museums offered additional free admission opportunities. In September 2021, the museums began to offer free admission to all visitors on Sundays, and in April 2022 the museums began the Harvard Art Museums at Night program, granting free admission to all visitors on the last Thursday of each month from 5 to 9pm (holidays permitting).

The new free admission policy for all visitors expands on the success of the more recent opportunities offered; the museums have seen dramatic increases in visitation in 2022 and 2023 as a result of the Sunday and Thursday evening initiatives and following the lifting of Covid-related policy restrictions in Spring 2022. Since that time, visitation has been consistently increasing at an average of 20 percent per month, with a notable 40 percent increase in August 2022. This growth has been sustained in the first half of 2023, with a 90 percent visitation increase in January and the highest-ever monthly visitation in April. The Free Sundays and Thursday evening events have both attracted, on average, between 1,500 and 2,000 visitors since their inception (a 50 percent increase for Sundays), with as much as half that number representing first-time visitors.

The combined effect of granting free admission to existing audiences and the expectation of continued growth in visitation represents a significant new investment in opening the museums and collections to residents of the Greater Boston area as well as those visiting from around the world. Harvard University and Harvard Square are major attractions to those visiting the area.

“We are thrilled to implement this new comprehensive free admission policy, which will remain in place permanently,” said Martha Tedeschi, the Elizabeth and John Moors Cabot Director of the Harvard Art Museums. “Taking this step represents our deep commitment to serving all audiences, enhancing our mission of teaching and research, and becoming a center where discovery, exchange, inclusion, and learning can flourish for all. Increasing numbers of longtime supporters and new friends alike have been showing us that we have something unique to offer in the cultural landscape and that we are a welcoming place to experience art and community together.”

Information to help visitors plan their visit to the Harvard Art Museums can be found at:
harvardartmuseums.org/visit

About the Harvard Art Museums

The Harvard Art Museums house one of the largest and most renowned art collections in the United States, comprising three museums (the Fogg, Busch-Reisinger, and Arthur M. Sackler Museums) and four research centers (the Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art, the Harvard Art Museums Archives, and the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis). The Fogg Museum includes Western art from the Middle Ages to the present; the Busch-Reisinger Museum, unique among North American museums, is dedicated to the study of all modes and periods of art from central and northern Europe, with an emphasis on German-speaking countries; and the Arthur M. Sackler Museum is focused on art from Asia, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean. Together, the collections include over 255,000 objects in all media. The Harvard Art Museums are distinguished by the range and depth of their collections, their groundbreaking exhibitions, and the original research of their staff. Integral to Harvard University and the wider community, the museums and research centers serve as resources for students, scholars, and the public. For more than a century they have been the nation's premier training ground for museum professionals and are renowned for their seminal role in developing the discipline of art history in the United States. The Harvard Art Museums have a rich tradition of considering the history of objects as an integral part of the teaching and study of art history, focusing on conservation and preservation concerns as well as technical studies. harvardartmuseums.org

The Harvard Art Museums receive support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Hours and Admission

Open Tuesday–Sunday, 10am–5pm; closed Mondays and major holidays. Admission is free to all visitors. For further information about visiting, including general policies, see harvardartmuseums.org/visit.

For more information, please contact

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