The Impact of the Philadelphia Museum of Art

2020 edition
Inspiring Creativity

When you show up consistently over time, it makes a difference. I know the word these days is “visual artist,” but I’m old-school, and I still call myself a painter.

For twenty years, I’ve collaborated with the museum as a teaching artist for the Delphi After School Art Club. Many students have never been to the museum until they take part in Art Club. Maybe they don’t feel strongly about their art skills or consider themselves artists. Their class comes in every week for twenty weeks, and we work on projects together that are inspired by the museum’s collection. By the end, they have confidence in their own creativity. They also feel comfortable in the museum—that’s something we all emphasize through the program. That doesn’t happen with just one visit.

Consistency doesn’t just matter to individual students. It’s what makes Art Club—and the museum—so special. You don’t often get to work with art programs that run steadily for twenty years straight. Through Art Club, I’ve been fortunate enough to work with the same Philadelphia school for ten years in a row. It’s not a flash in the pan. We’re building real relationships and trust. That’s how you create real impact—both in education and all the other areas in this report.

Over the two decades I’ve been here, I’ve seen the museum really ramp up its outreach and education to invite people in. I’m so proud to be part of this program. I can’t wait to see what the next twenty years will bring.

Diane Pieri
Teaching artist

The Philadelphia Museum of Art’s educational mission is supported by generous donors including The Delphi Project Foundation, a private nonprofit funded by Reliance Standard Life Insurance Company.

For another example of museum programs supported by The Delphi Project Foundation, see The City’s Classroom section.

20 years

of collaboration between The Delphi Project Foundation and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, which has created a range of programs for middle- and high-school students, including Art Club, Art Partners, Art Futures, Teen Sketch Club, and Summer Teen Media Program.

Teen programs at the museum include After School Art Club and the Teen Ambassador Group, members of which are pictured here, who shape gallery talks and other activities by teens for teens.
We’re creating more opportunities for people to visit for free or reduced cost.

The whole family is welcome: as of October 2019, those 18 and under now visit for free, not just 12 and under.

46,922

Pay What You Wish attendees on Wednesday nights in 2019

Since we introduced extended Pay What You Wish hours on Wednesday nights, more people have been taking advantage of the chance to explore our galleries in the evening, for as little as one penny. Last year saw our highest-ever attendance on Wednesday nights, with visitors paying on average just $4 instead of $25 (one adult ticket at the general admission rate).

46,922

Visitors on Pay What You Wish Wednesday nights are twice as likely to come from Philly neighborhoods like Brewerytown, Kingsessing, and Queen Village, helping us reach an audience that better represents our city.

Our staff is a community resource, just like our collection. We want to connect more people to the arts, whether that happens within our walls or out in Philly neighborhoods.

“‘My introduction to Veterans Empowered Through Art was the Six-Week Selfie program. I went kicking and screaming, really. I’d never thought of myself as an artistic person.

My opinion has changed, 180 degrees. I never knew art could affect me that way. Looking at a work of art alongside other veterans gives you a chance to get out of your own head—you’re thinking about what you’re seeing. Now, the museum will always be a refuge for me—a place I can go and decompress.’”

Sergeant David Allen, Gulf War veteran and lifelong Philadelphian

“‘So many art programs have been taken out of schools. The museum started coming here, teaching the children how to use the cameras, and going to different sites to take pictures. They love it, and I love to see the way their faces light up. They can see things differently through the eye of a camera.’”

Diane Scott, Brewerytown Athletic Rec Center

Talia Smith, a participant in the photography workshops at Brewerytown Athletic Rec Center.

VET Art participants working on art-making activities at the museum.
Students and educators do great things with our collection.

Because we never charge fees to Philadelphia public and charter schools, 50% of student visits came at no cost.

Private and parochial schools on the other hand are charged discounted rates for student visits.

60,400 student visits across all programs in the 2018–19 school year

32% growth in attendance from the previous year (45,806).

Educational programs in the museum support skills that matter in the classroom and in life. Sherlock, our program for fifth- and sixth-graders, helps build observational skills through a series of classroom and gallery visits.

“Students’ observation skills advanced, particularly in looking holistically across a work of art. Students’ critical thinking skills advanced, particularly evidential reasoning. Students’ creative thinking skills advanced, particularly questioning and wondering.”

Executive summary of Sherlock study by RK&A, a planning, evaluation, and research firm that supports museums and cultural organizations

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Lisa Tyler, art teacher, Baldi Middle School

“The Sherlock program was awesome. The kids in the class started feeling ownership of the museum space, and they also started owning their ability to observe artwork. They came away from Sherlock feeling very confident that you could show them any work of art, and they’d be able to talk about it. That would not have occurred without multiple visits. It wouldn’t have gelled. When it does gel, it’s magic, and it will never go away.”

Lisa Tyler, art teacher, Baldi Middle School

In-gallery Sherlock lessons ask students to think critically about the works of art on view.
Creativity doesn’t end once a museum visit is over. Museum staff and teaching artists work with students in their schools through programs like Art Partners, funded through The Delphi Project Foundation. In the 2018–19 school year, Sharswood Elementary School took part in its second Art Partners residency with the museum. Gabby James, Sharswood’s art teacher of fifteen years, and Andrew Christman, the visiting artist at the school, collaborated with Sharswood students to create an installation for their auditorium.

Gabby James: If we were going to invest time into making art, it made sense for it to be something permanent. Our auditorium has always felt sort of stagnant and joyless, and since it’s the backdrop to so many of our events, it felt like it should be celebratory. We did this project with a graduating eighth-grade class as a send-off.

Andrew Christman: On the tour of the museum, the kids were very struck by one of the French palace ballrooms. The ornate, gold features of that room captured everybody’s imagination and became, literally, the framework of the project. We made gold lamé frames to hold portraits of members of the community and historical photographs of the community.

GJ: The top portion of the installation is like a wall in a family’s living room, with wallpaper panels, portraits, and all of the frames painted gold. The bottom portion represents the city and community that surrounds our school. The different foods, the different traditions, the different people. For the pictures on the wall, we created an email account and put out a call for people to send in their own pictures. We got, like, a hundred pictures. It became a community project.

AC: The scale really did take off. I didn’t expect it to be so big. The project also created a space for the students to have interesting and challenging conversations about heritage—the different traditions each family observes at home.

GJ: It was empowering for students to work together and learn about different aspects of other cultures and celebrations. Not everyone knew what a quinceañera was, or about different holiday traditions.

AC: What I’ve really enjoyed about the museum’s programs like Art Partners is that there is the space to actually have a meaningful relationship. For many students, it’s their very first time coming to the museum. The museum educators do a really good job making every student feel comfortable.

GJ: It was a very special graduation. Now the auditorium is a joyful room! And Andrew and I did a workshop on the project for other educators through VAST (Visual Arts as Sources for Teaching), the museum’s summer program for teachers, so more schools can learn from our experience.

This installation at Sharswood Elementary was a collaboration between students, staff, the museum’s visiting artist, and the local community in South Philadelphia.
Through the Art Bridges + Terra Foundation Initiative, the museum is sharing works of American art with 8 museums across Pennsylvania.

We care for our collection so it can be shared with as many people as possible.

In 2019, the first year of this multiyear partnership, these museums created exhibitions with loaned works from our collection of American art for their local communities exploring such varied themes as the Bauhaus, the evolving image of the Virgin Mary, and representations of Native Americans in art.

Conservation staff are responsible for preparing works of art to go on loan or on view in our galleries safely.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artwork Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>Artworks loaned</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>56 institutions in 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ceramic objects</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>loaned to The Clay Studio in Philadelphia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stone and clay sculptures</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>now on long-term loan to the Penn Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loans to institutions across the world</td>
<td>11 countries</td>
<td>received loans from the museum</td>
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<td>Visits to traveling exhibitions</td>
<td>350,000</td>
<td>to our traveling exhibition The Essential Duchamp in Japan, Korea, and Australia</td>
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Barbara Jones, Chief Curator, The Westmoreland Museum of American Art

State Senator Patrick Browne (16th District, Lehigh Valley)
We connect artists with visitors to create meaningful experiences for both.

740 visits to intimate conversations with artists such as David Lebe, Antony Gormley, and the quilters of Gee’s Bend

7,187 visits to performance-driven programs celebrating the Art of Poetry, including the Def Poetry Reunion and an evening with Patti Smith celebrating Walt Whitman

“...When I was 11 years old, I came to this art museum with my father. It was the first time that I saw visual art, and it was on that day that I knew I wanted to be an artist.”

Patti Smith, delivering the Rose Susan Hirschhorn Behrend lecture in honor of Walt Whitman’s 200th birthday.

Art historian Leslie King-Hammond, second from left, speaks with quilters Louisiana Bendolph, Essie B. Pettway, and Mary Lee Bendolph about their work on view in the exhibition Souls Grown Deep: Artists of the African American South.

Painter and Def Poetry Jam alumna Vanessa German performs in the Great Stair Hall as part of the sold-out Def Poetry Reunion in April 2019.

Philadelphia Museum of Art
We drive tourism, generate tax revenue, and create opportunity.

$1.6B in economic impact over the last 5 years
$368M in economic impact in 2019

451,000 visits to Philadelphia driven by the museum
277,400 visits to other local attractions
75,300 hotel room nights

$21.8M 2019 tax revenue generated for city and commonwealth combined

Tax dollars fuel state and local budgets to support libraries, parks, transportation, healthcare, roads, and more

2.9K full-time equivalent jobs

$130.9M Impact from visitor spending outside the museum (restaurants, hotels, shopping, etc.)
$131.5M Impact from the museum’s organizational spending
$106.1M Impact from the museum’s capital spending (construction and other expenses)
Bigger gallery footprint, lower carbon footprint.

Through the City of Philadelphia’s Municipal Energy Master Plan, the museum’s utility systems are now more efficient, from new LED gallery lighting to retrofitted restrooms.

Facilities & Sustainability

23%

decrease in energy usage

- 26% Electricity consumption
- 21% Steam usage
- 25% Water usage

Replacing outdated lighting with LEDs improved energy efficiency and visibility in our new galleries of Chinese art.

20,000+
square feet of new or renovated gallery space since 2016

South Asian art

Our holdings of South Asian art (more than 5,000 objects) were our first to be completely digitized in high-resolution photography, making them completely accessible on our website and supporting new digital gallery interactives.

Chinese art

In their first year open, these galleries exceeded attendance expectations by more than 50%.

European art

Some of the most popular spaces in the museum, featuring Impressionism and other 19th-century art, have been renovated and reorganized for the first time in forty years.

Coming soon: Early American art

Revisiting this collection gives us an opportunity to tell more American stories, including the contributions of women, indigenous, and enslaved artists and artisans.

Contemporary art

To be inaugurated with an exhibition of work by living artists of Philadelphia, celebrating our diverse creative community.
From the Director

The publication of this report, now in its second year, provides me with the timely opportunity to reflect on all the ways the arts can make a difference—from our long-standing programs that reach tens of thousands, to single moments that create lasting ripple effects.

I am continually inspired by how our community makes use of our collection to do incredible and unexpected things. I am also proud to see that as the museum’s physical spaces grow—with more room for art, performances, and partnerships—our impact is growing, too. As construction on our Frank Gehry-designed Core Project progresses, we are serving more students and offering more opportunities to engage with the museum for free or at reduced cost.

I particularly enjoyed celebrating the opening of our new North Entrance last fall with Dr. William Hite, superintendent of the School District of Philadelphia, and students from nearby Bache-Martin Elementary School. At the same time, we have made strategic choices to be more sustainable and inclusive. Our museum is a collection of relationships, as well as a collection of works of art. To all our visitors, partners, supporters, and staff—you have my deepest thanks for all you make possible. Art is a refuge and source of inspiration during challenging times, and the world has never needed it more.

Timothy Rub
The George D. Widener Director and Chief Executive Officer

Timothy Rub, the George D. Widener Director and Chief Executive Officer, welcomes second-graders from Bache-Martin through the museum’s North Entrance in September 2019.
Cover and photographs of VET Art participants, Vanessa German, Souls Grown Deep artist talk, family at pencil bar, and visitors in Chinese galleries by Elizabeth Leitzell.