



## **Princeton University to open Art Museum with inaugural exhibitions for new building**

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Princeton, NJ The Princeton University Art Museum will open its highly anticipated new building to the public on Friday, October 31, 2025, following a multi-year design and construction process first announced in 2018. The 146,000 s/f teaching museum will effectively double the Museum's spaces for display, learning, gathering, and visitor amenities. Sitting in Princeton University's campus, the building embodies the institution's long-standing commitment to serve the arts and humanities, community gathering places, and a public gateway to the University's intellectual resources.

The Museum simultaneously announced its inaugural season of special exhibitions, along with the curatorial approach to the display of its globe-spanning collections, now numbering over 117,000 objects and representing five thousand years of human creativity. The building was designed by Adjaye Associates, in collaboration with executive architect Cooper Robertson.

The three-level building shaped around nine interlocking pavilions devotes 80,000 s/f to gallery display, with the vast majority of these spaces located on a single level. The Museum's ground floor features entrances at all sides of the building, inviting those traversing campus to utilize two interior "artwalks", themselves embedded with works of art, including site-specific sculpture and large-scale paintings.

Over 12,000 s/f is dedicated to education, including two creativity labs for hands-on artmaking, six object study classrooms, an auditorium, two seminar rooms, and the Grand Hall, a space which can be transformed to accommodate teaching for up to 265, performances, large events, or informal social gathering. A wood lined Museum Store sits at the intersection of the two artwalks. Conservation studios with their own classroom space are located on the Museum's second and third floors, while a full-service restaurant with indoor and outdoor dining is located on the third floor. A number of outdoor terraces and an outdoor amphitheater round out the perimeter of the new Museum, offering more possibilities for visitors to engage with the Museum's robust schedule of public programs.

"This project represents not only the coming to a fruition of dreams that date back thirty years of a museum building that would be worthy both of this beautiful campus and of our collections, but a launchpad to years of exciting installations and programs," said James Steward, the Museum's Nancy A. Nasher—David J. Haemisegger, Class of 1976, director.

The Museum will inaugurate the space with two special exhibitions honoring the vision and

generosity of those connected to its recent history. Princeton Collects highlights works of art donated on the occasion of the new Museum's opening, including major paintings by artists such as Mark Rothko, Joan Mitchell, and Gerhard Richter. Toshiko Takaezu: Dialogues in Clay positions the ceramic art of the abstract artist and Princeton professor within an array of experimental artistic exchanges between the artist, her contemporaries, and her teachers. The Museum's inaugural season continues in spring 2026 with Willem de Kooning: The Breakthrough Years, 1945–50, which concentrates on the essential generative years for the abstract expressionist painter; and Photography as a Way of Life, exploring midcentury photographic modernism through three figures central to the age, Minor White, Aaron Siskind, and Harry Callahan. An exhibition of the work of iconic American artist Jean-Michel Basquiat is planned for fall 2026.

The new Museum also features four large-scale commissions by artists Nick Cave, Diana al-Hadid, Tu?n Andrew Nguy?n, and Jane Irish, and two outdoor sculpture acquisitions by artists Jun Kaneko and Rose B. Simpson. These site-specific artworks are integrated into the unique architecture and landscape design of the building.

The Museum's collections galleries embrace a collaborative curatorial philosophy. Rather than pursuing a single organizing principle across collections areas, curators have taken dynamic, collaborative, and compatible approaches that will group objects not just by geography, chronology, or theme, but provide interweaving of these approaches.

"We have curated the Museum in ways that will welcome visitors not only to experience beauty, but also to analyze it; to admire creativity and to contextualize it; to marvel at materials and to complicate their origins," said Juliana Ochs Dweck, chief curator of the Princeton University Art Museum. "In the new building, visitors can be in direct contact with our collections, whether walking over recessed ancient floor mosaics, ascending the Grand Stairs across from a medieval Spanish staircase, or encountering a dialogue between light-based works spanning 500 years. Our new Museum offers so many ways to have intimate encounters with art, to pursue curiosity, engage in meaningful dialogue, to find solace or belonging."

Following a 24-hour open house on Friday, October 31, 2025 with free and public events designed to activate the Museum's new spaces, visitors can look forward to a full schedule of public programming throughout the season including artist conversations, panel discussions, film screenings, performances, and artmaking for all ages and abilities.

"The exhibitions we've chosen to inaugurate our new building celebrate collecting, legacy, and the future, and speak to our commitment to reimagine how we curate and present art in this new space," said Steward. "Of course Willem de Kooning was an enormously influential artist, but this exhibition, which pivots around his first solo exhibition in 1948, illuminates the artist's process of inquiry as formative within the long arc of his career. It's a show I've wanted us to do since I arrived in 2009. Toshiko Takaezu played an integral role in elevating ceramics in the eyes of the art world and was a beloved professor at Princeton for nearly 30 years; our goal is to present her as one of the greatest abstract artists of her time, the equal to a Helen Frankenthaler. As a teaching museum, we have a responsibility not merely to present works by many of the most monumental artists of our age or of

any age, but to go deeper and grapple with how they arrived at the legacies for which we know them today.”

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