

NATIONAL DOCENT SYMPOSIUM DETROIT 2026

November 6-9, 2026

hosted by the Detroit Institute of Arts



**National Docent
Symposium Council**

Welcome!

Dear Fellow Conference Attendees,

We are extremely excited to welcome you to Detroit!

The Detroit Institute of Arts has a long history of exceptional programming and world-renowned exhibitions. Our sprawling collection of art stands ready for you to explore, appreciate and learn.

We feel truly fortunate to partner with the National Docent Symposium Council to bring this event together for you to enjoy.

From the Excursions to the Breakouts and Keynote Speakers we are hopeful that we have planned something wonderful and varied for everyone to experience.

Time spent with friends, old and new, is one of the many treasures we hope you will take away from this Symposium.

Detroit continues to be in the midst of a Renaissance, and we look forward to your experiencing the positive energy that resonates every day within our special city.

Thank you for your support and we look forward to a wonderful experience for everyone!

Get ready to Rev Your Engines!

Amy, Michelle and Barbara
Co-Chairs



On behalf of the Detroit Institute of Arts community, it is my pleasure to welcome you to Detroit for the 2026 National Docent Symposium.

The DIA is delighted to partner with our museum docent committee and the National Docent Symposium Council to present this year's gathering. Like the institutions you represent, the DIA relies on its volunteers to create extraordinary experiences for our visitors in the museum and throughout our communities. They help us realize our vision of serving as the town square of the community— a gathering place for everyone — and advance our mission to create experiences that help each visitor find personal meaning in art, individually and with each other.

You will find Detroit to be a classic American city whose contributions to industry, design, technology, arts and culture, and the Civil Rights movement have influenced and enriched every aspect of life. In the 21st Century, Detroit continues its renaissance as a vital manufacturing and technology hub, while reinventing and revitalizing itself, inspiring a new generation of innovators, inventors, creators, and artists.

Thank you for joining us in Detroit for the 2026 National Docent Symposium. I am confident this weekend will provide a wealth of extraordinary learning and collaborative experiences that will enhance your own docent practice.

Salvador Salort-Pons, PhD

The Mary Anne and Eugene A. Gargaro Jr.
Director, President, and CEO



Dear NDS 2026 Delegates,

Welcome to the twenty-third biennial National Docent Symposium.

These four days offer an unparalleled opportunity for docents and guides to learn, share, and connect. Voted best art museum in the United States by *USA Today*, the Detroit Institute of Arts will provide the backdrop for us to exchange ideas, discuss best practices and trends, explore the city's cultural treasures, foster relationships, discover ways of perfecting our craft, and have fun! All of this is possible due to the exceptional dedication, planning, creativity, and innovation of our Detroit hosts. The docents and staff of the Detroit Institute of Arts have worked tirelessly to bring this symposium to fruition.

On behalf of the National Docent Symposium Council (NDSC), I thank co-chairs Amy Freundl, Michelle Kendell and Barbara Quilty for their leadership. We appreciate the time and talents of their steering committee, and the contributions of all those who have made this event possible. We are also most grateful to Detroit Institute of Arts Director Salvador Salort-Pons for inviting us to Detroit and to Director of Volunteer Services & Group Services Phil Rivera for his invaluable support and guidance in moving this project forward. And we are indebted to the many community partners who have opened their doors to us during this Symposium.

The NDSC has supported docents and guides across North America for forty-five years. While we have expanded our offerings through webinars, online groups, touring handbooks, and website resources, the Symposium is at the core of our mission. It is the only time we gather in person to learn, share and connect. You will experience the amazing energy of being among hundreds of your peers, and be inspired by forward-thinking, collaborative conversations.

Thank you for joining us in Detroit. Let's continue to build and strengthen the docent community, here and well into the future.

Joanne Eudy

President, National Docent Symposium Council
www.nationaldocents.org



Welcome to Detroit: A City of Resilience, Rhythm, & Reinvention

▲ **Diego M. Rivera**
Detroit Industry,
(detail) North
Wall, 1932-1933
Detroit Institute of
Arts, Gift of Edsel B.
Ford, 33.10.N

THERE'S A CERTAIN ENERGY you feel the moment you arrive in Detroit. It's not loud or flashy, it's something deeper. A steady pulse built from history, innovation, creativity, and pride. Detroit isn't just a destination; it's a story still being written, and every visitor becomes a small part of it.

Known as the Motor City, Detroit earned its place in history as the heart of America's automotive industry. This is where innovation taught the world how to move, where factories roared day and night, and where generations built a legacy of craftsmanship, art and ambition. It's the birthplace of a sound that changed music forever. You can still feel that spirit today—not just in its industry, but in its people.

The City of Detroit is also known for its arts. Detroit is the only U.S. city designated as a UNESCO City of Design. It is one of only 10 U.S. cities to have its own dedicated Michelin Green Guide due to its cultural influence through institutions including the Detroit Institute of Arts, The Henry Ford, and Cranbrook Educational Community. It was also featured in a recent Travel and Leisure article entitled "This Is the Most Underrated City Everyone Should Visit Once."

What makes Detroit truly special is its ability to reinvent itself. Over the years, the city has faced challenges, but it has never lost its identity. Instead, it has transformed. Creativity thrives here, not despite adversity, but because of it. Whether you're exploring riverfront views, discovering local art, or simply taking in the skyline, the city offers moments that feel both grounded and inspiring. Detroit blends old and new in a way that feels authentic rather than forced. Skyscrapers stand beside beautifully restored architecture. Public spaces invite people to gather, relax, and connect.

And then there are the people. Detroiters carry a quiet confidence and a deep sense of community. They're proud of where they come from—and eager to share it. Visitors often arrive curious, but they leave with something more meaningful: respect for a city that refuses to be defined by its past alone.

So welcome to Detroit—a city that doesn't try to be perfect. It's real. It's evolving. And that's exactly what makes it unforgettable!

Registration Information

Registration for the National Docent Symposium 2026 is a two-step process.

First step:

Register using the link at <https://dia.org/docentsymposium2026> for the symposium itself, all activities that have an additional charge, which are arranged by date on the registration site and the hotel. You will receive an email confirmation of your symposium registration.

Second step:

You will receive an email with links to register for Breakout Sessions, which have no additional charge. It is important for you to register for the Breakout Sessions so that you are able to attend the ones that interest you.

After you complete registration for the Breakout Sessions you will receive an email receipt/confirmation of that registration as well, and your registration will be complete.

When you arrive at the conference, please stop by the Registration/Check in desk to receive your schedule, nametag, and welcome packet.

Q. What is included in the Registration Fee?

A. The registration fee includes: an opening cocktail party, breakfast/brunch on Saturday through Monday, Lunch on Saturday and Sunday, attendance at 5 breakout sessions, an afternoon at the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA), an afternoon of exploration at museums and cultural sites in Detroit's Town Square centered around the DIA, and dinner at the DIA. Additional activities, including pre-symposium excursions and dinner at the Henry Ford Museum, require the payment of an additional charge.

Hotel Reservations:

You can use the link at <https://dia.org/docentsymposium2026> to make a room reservation at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center at the special conference rate.

Other FAQs:

Q. Can I get a full or partial refund after I have completed the registration process?

A. The Symposium, excursions and other additional activities that carried a charge are non-refundable.

Q. Can I change my excursion and breakout sessions choices after I have registered?

A. Not online. However, we will review requests on a case-by-case basis; the ability to accommodate changes will depend on whether there are openings left in the excursions and breakout sessions you would like to attend instead of the ones registered for.

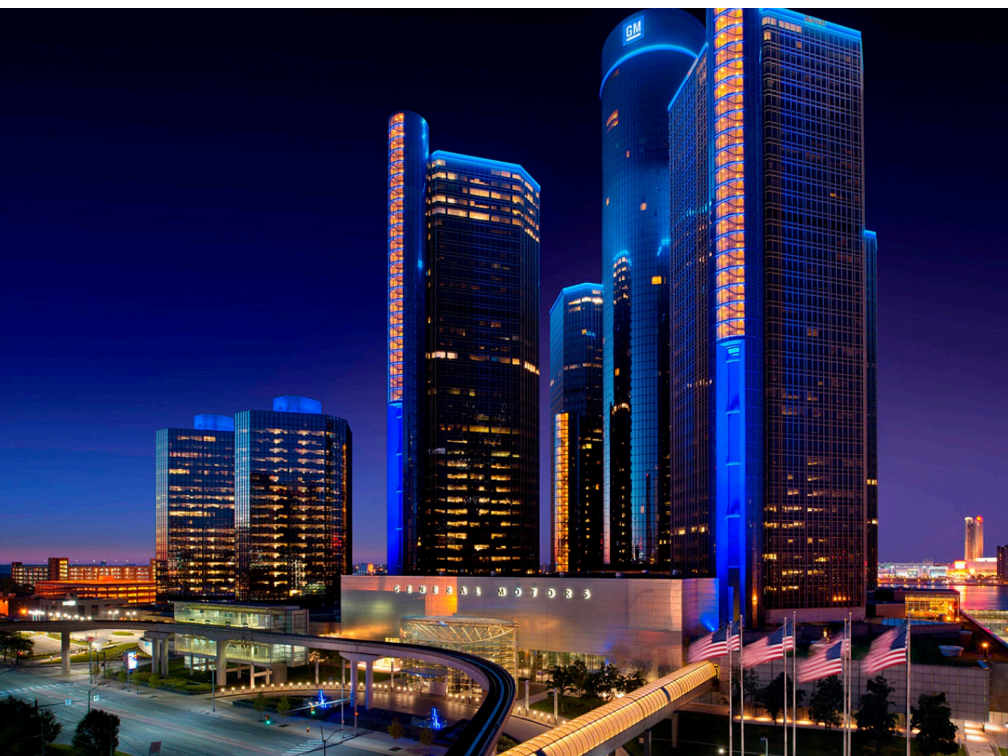
Q. When does early bird pricing end?

A. May 31, 2026.

Q. When does registration close?

A. September 14, 2026 or sooner, if sold out.

For registration questions email: registration2026nds@gmail.com



Welcome to Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center

AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE awaits you at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center - your host for the 2026 National Docent Symposium. Situated on the edge of the Detroit River, this contemporary hotel is the tallest building in Michigan, standing 727 feet with 73 floors, and offering rooms with sweeping floor to ceiling views of the downtown skyline, the Detroit River and Windsor, Canada. Located next to the Detroit Riverwalk, voted the best riverwalk three years in a row, guests will enjoy convenient access to exploring the downtown scene with restaurants, shops and entertainment venues accessible, via the Detroit People Mover. You'll find your stay in the "D" to be a memorable experience staying in one of the most iconic buildings in a true Renaissance city!

*Transportation from the Detroit Airport (DTW) to the Detroit Marriott Renaissance Center is available via taxi or rideshare options such as Uber or Lyft. (Cost of approximately \$50-\$70 depending on time of day and type of car.) You can access these services by following the signs for "ground transportation services" at either terminal. The drive from airport to hotel is approximately 30 minutes.



Schedule at a Glance

▲ Diego M. Rivera, *Detroit Industry*, (detail) South Wall, 1932-1933
Detroit Institute of Arts, Gift of Edsel B. Ford, 33.10.5

Thursday, November 5

8 a.m. – 7 p.m.	Registration	Marriott Motor Lobby
12 p.m. – 5 p.m.	Half Day Excursions	Off-site

Friday, November 6

8 a.m. – 7 p.m.	Registration	Marriott Motor Lobby
9:00 a.m. – 5 p.m.	Full Day Excursions	Off-site
9:00 a.m. – 2 p.m.	Half Day Excursions	Off-site
12 p.m. – 5 p.m.	Half Day Excursions	Off-site
5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.	Welcome Reception	Marriott

Saturday, November 7

8 a.m. – 7 p.m.	Registration	Ambassador Lobby
7:00 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.	Breakfast with Keynote <i>Speaker Kevin Adkisson</i>	Ambassador Ballroom
8:45 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.	Breakout Session 1	Various
10 a.m. – 11 a.m.	Breakout Session 2	Various
11:15 a.m. – 12:15 a.m.	Breakout Session 3	Various
12:15 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Box Lunch To Go	Ambassador Ballroom
1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	Afternoon out	Detroit's Town Square
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	Dinner in the museum	DIA

Sunday, November 8

7:15 a.m. – 8:15 a.m.	Coffee Hour	Ambassador Ballroom
8:15 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	Breakout Session 4	Various
9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Breakout with Bubbles	Ambassador Ballroom
12:30 p.m. – 5 p.m.	Afternoon in the DIA	DIA
6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Dinner at The Henry Ford	(Optional)

Monday, November 9

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Breakfast	Ambassador Ballroom
9:15 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	Breakout Session 5	Various
10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Closing Keynote <i>Speaker Mario Moore</i>	Ambassador Ballroom

Thursday Excursions

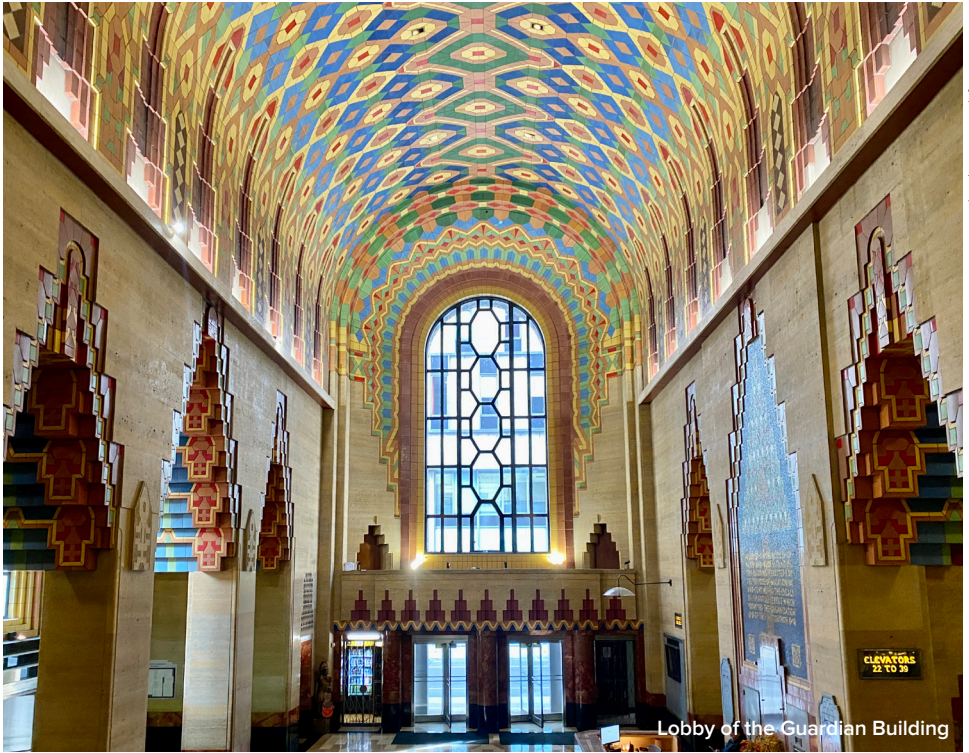


Photo: W. Jeremy (attributions: p.35)

An Afternoon in Detroit: Past, Present and Future

AN AFTERNOON OUT in Detroit will showcase the history and the future of our dynamic host city. Explore significant areas of the city, from Downtown to historic and cultural districts such as:

- **Eastern Market**, a 19th century landmark on the National Register of Historic Places with contemporary mural highlights
- **The Boston- Edison Historic District**

The Downtown stops will include:

- The classic Art Deco **Guardian Building**
- The iconic **Fisher Building** designed by Albert Kahn
- **Canfield Street** – home of Shinola and Third Man Records and a photo-stop at the newly restored **Michigan Central Station**.



Edsel & Eleanor Ford Estate

Nooks & Crannies: **Behind-the-Scenes Tour at** **the Edsel & Eleanor Ford Estate**

STEP BEYOND THE TRADITIONAL tour of the Edsel & Eleanor Ford Estate and explore the hidden corners on this exclusive Nooks & Crannies behind-the-scenes experience. Go underground through the original tunnel connecting the main house to the powerhouse, once used by staff to navigate discreetly. You'll also visit rarely seen areas such as the attic, basement, infirmary, and service quarters—spaces that reveal the behind-the-scenes operations of this magnificent 1920s estate.

Edsel Ford, the only son of Henry Ford and president of Ford Motor Company, brought his passion for design and innovation to every detail of this home. From exquisite craftsmanship and architecture to surprising engineering features, this in-depth tour offers a rare glimpse into the elegance and complexity of Ford family life. Don't miss this fascinating look at history from the inside out!

Thursday Excursions



Charles McGee sculpture at The Shepherd

The Shepherd, Little Village and Middle Gray

THE SHEPHERD AND the surrounding **Little Village** including **Middle Gray**, offer a unique cultural destination where historic architecture meets contemporary creativity. A century old Romanesque church, The Shepherd has been transformed into an immersive art space featuring rotating installations within a stunning preserved interior. In one of The Shepherd's transepts is a public archive curated by Asmaa Walton, dedicated to artists of color.

Just beyond The Shepherd, Little Village unfolds as a walkable arts campus. Its adaptive design features exhibition galleries, a performing arts theater, and community workshop spaces. Surrounding grounds include the James Beard Award-winning Warda Patisserie, Father Forgive Me Wine and Cocktail Bar, a Tony Hawk–designed skatepark, and a sculpture park honoring Charles McGee.

Little Village includes the collection at Middle Gray which spans painting, photography, and design, each work chosen for how it contributes to the space and the people working in it. Mario Moore's oil paintings *My Labour* and *My Body* hang alongside custom work by Jason Revok and sculpture by Misaki Kawai, each artist active and connected to Detroit's contemporary scene. Many pieces have entered the collection through direct relationships between the artists and founder Romeo Okwara, rooted in shared reference, trust, and ongoing dialogue.

Photography is at the center of Middle Gray's practice. A library curated with Black Arts Library grounds the space in broader art historical and cultural context. Middle Gray is a working studio; the programming and mission center on the visual medium, and every object and image in the space is there to support that conversation.

Together, this afternoon excursion offers a guided experience through Detroit's evolving creative landscape—blending history, community, and modern artistic expression in one unforgettable visit.

Private Tours of Collections with Global Connections

IN OUR FIRST TOUR of the afternoon you will encounter an extensive collection across all media focusing on **Asian and African art**. The collection includes diverse art forms, cultural and devotional objects. Lurestan antiquities, Tibetan furniture and Indian miniatures are interspersed with 20th Century contemporary paintings and sculptures in this curated collection.

Our second tour of the afternoon will be hosted in an architecturally significant home in a **contemporary “prairie style”** design with Custom built galleries to display a discriminatingly curated collection of **Inuit art**. The art objects represent all creative media: sculptures carved from different kinds of stone, wood and animal bone, paintings, textiles and serigraphs. The Inuit works are displayed together with a **rare cartography collection** that contains maps from as early as 1493. Many of these maps, which reflect the history of Europe-based exploration and geopolitics, were handcrafted with intricate insets, brilliantly hand painted, and remain vibrant after hundreds of years.

Private Tours: Contemporary and African American Art Collections

Contemporary Art Collection, Collector’s Statement: This contemporary collection is rooted in shared experiences, long-standing relationships, and a deep commitment to the artists that we admire. Many of the works come from past exhibitions in our gallery or from artists we’ve collaborated with through public projects and community programs in Detroit. The collection has grown organically alongside our professional journey and reflects personal friendships as much as artistic affinities. Each piece serves as a reminder of meaningful collaborations and shared memories, creating a living archive of our relationships—one that also shapes the creative world surrounding our family.

African American Art Collection, Collector’s Statement: Prominent Detroit collectors of African American contemporary art open their expansive English Tudor home where on display are over four hundred pieces of visual art including sculpture, landscapes, still life and photography from emerging to established artists. The collection also includes a blend of gilded age antiques, sculptures and fine art glass.

Friday Excursions



Photo: Warren LeMay (attributions: p.35)

Glass Pavilion at the Toledo Museum of Art

TAKE AN EXCURSION to the Toledo Museum of Art (TMA), one of *USA Today's* Top Ten Art Museums in the USA. The schedule will include a glassblowing demonstration, glass tours, sculpture garden tours as well as a tour of the museum's Education Wing and Family Center.

The Studio Glass movement was born in Toledo, literally on the museum's campus. On our tour we will experience the world of glass during a glass blowing demonstration in the TMA's Glass Pavilion. The TMA's artists will craft intricate pieces in their state-of-the-art hot shop. As molten glass transforms into works of art, demonstrating artists delve into the history of this craft while explaining the science behind glass, as they share insights into the material's unique properties.

Glass Pavilion: Opened in 2006, the modernist Glass Pavilion received *Travel+Leisure's* 2007 Design Award for Best Museum. The building was designed by Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa, lead architects of SANAA (Sejima and Nishizawa and Associates). SANAA won the 2010 Pritzker architecture award for its superior designs.

The exterior and many of the interior walls of the 74,000 square foot Pavilion are made entirely of glass. The roof and interior structural supports are made of steel. Each of the more than 360 panels—many of them curved—that make up the glass walls measures approximately 8 feet wide by 13 ½ feet high, and weighs 1,300 to 1,500 pounds.

The TMA will be in the process of construction but there will still be plenty to see in the Glass Pavilion space.



A day out in Dearborn: Henry Ford’s Fair Lane Manor, the Rouge Plant, and the Arab American National Museum

DEARBORN IS A CROSSROADS of America – home of the Ford Motor Company and the first Arab American Museum in the U.S. Our day out in Dearborn will include a tour of Ford’s Rouge Factory, immortalized in Diego Rivera’s murals at the DIA, a tour of Fair Lane, the estate of Henry Ford and a tour of the Arab American Museum.

The **Rouge Plant** tour will start with a walk through the Legacy Gallery to look back at the iconic vehicles manufactured at the Rouge complex followed by a multisensory experience in the Manufacturing Innovation Theater. Next, up to the observation deck for sweeping views of the Rouge Complex and one of the world’s largest living roofs. The culmination of our tour will be walking on the elevated plant walkway for a look at where the legendary Ford F-150 is assembled.

We will have a private view of **Fair Lane** as it is preparing for reopening following an extended period of restoration to reflect the look and feel of the estate in 1919 when it was the home of Henry and Clara Ford.

The **Arab American National Museum** (AANM) is the first museum in the United States devoted to documenting and sharing Arab American contributions that shaped the economic, political and cultural landscapes of American life.

Friday Excursions



Photo: 42BRT (attributions: p.35)

Art in the City! Detroit's highlights in Architecture and the Arts

THIS FULL DAY TOUR puts a focus on art in the city, including murals, and Detroit art projects. On your feet the day will include stops for:

- **Mural walking tour at Eastern Market**, a 19th century landmark on the National Register of Historic Places
- **MBAD African Bead Museum**
- Art Deco masterpiece the **Guardian Building**
- The **Fisher Building** designed by Albert Kahn
- **Canfield Street**, home of Shinola and Third Man Records

The day will also include a drive through significant areas of the city, from Downtown to historic and cultural districts:

- **Downtown**, including the **Spirit of Detroit** by Marshall Fredericks
- **Boston-Edison** Historic District
- **Heidelberg Project**, an outdoor art environment created by artist Tyree Guyton

Depending on availability the day will include a photo-stop at the newly restored **Michigan Central Station**.



The Zekelman Holocaust Center

Private tour of The Zekelman Holocaust Center

THE ZEKELMAN HOLOCAUST CENTER (The HC) is the first free-standing institution of its kind in the United States, opening in 1984, 9 years before our national Holocaust Center in Washington, D. C. It is the only Holocaust Center in the U. S. to house one of the eleven saplings from the chestnut tree outside Anne Frank's hiding place in Amsterdam. Considered the nexus of Holocaust learning and instruction in the U. S., the Zekelman Holocaust Center aids in the preservation of Holocaust history to combat rising antisemitism and Holocaust distortion.

The Zekelman Holocaust Center excursion features a 75-minute docent-led tour of the recently renovated HC (2024) that focuses on the Holocaust through survivors' testimonies to help understand this turbulent history. This powerful and informative tour will include survival videos, a short movie on Jewish history, archival exhibits on antisemitism, and yearly displays from 1939-1945. Along with the tour, visitors will hear welcome remarks from the CEO of the Holocaust Center, Rabbi Eli Mayerfeld, learn from Dr. Katie Chaka-Parks, Director of Education, how the new exhibits were chosen and how docents are trained, and listen to a talk by a second-generation (son/daughter of a Holocaust survivor) speaker. A kosher lunch will be served.

Friday Excursions

Albert Kahn's Detroit: An Architecture and Innovation Tour

Photo: A Generous German (attributions: p.35)



DETROIT LED THE WORLD in architectural innovation during the first half of 20th century, and perhaps the most important and influential of the city's architects was Albert Kahn. Almost single-handedly, Kahn revolutionized factory design, resulting in the high-volume, mass production of automobiles, aircraft, engines, weapons, and other consumer products. Albert Kahn and his engineer brother, Julius Kahn, the inventor of modern reinforced concrete, transformed factories, warehouses, and office buildings from dark and dingy fire traps, into strong, well lit, clean and safe modern structures.

By the late 1930s, Albert Kahn's firm was the leading industrial architecture firm in the world and was designing nearly 20 percent of all architect-designed industrial buildings in the United States.

From the towering smokestacks of The Ford Motor Factory in Highland Park to the awe-inspiring size of the River Rouge Complex, Kahn's team helped create the Detroit skyline.

Join The Albert Kahn Legacy Foundation for a three hour tour of Albert Kahn's most significant and influential buildings. The tour will include the Detroit News Building, the Kresge headquarters building, the Albert Kahn home, the GM/Cadillac Square Building, the Cadillac factory at 450 Amsterdam, the Howard Muzzy House and the Ford Motor Highland Park Plant as well as a tour of the iconic Fisher Building – an Art Deco masterpiece!

You'll learn about the varying styles and constructions of Kahn's most notable buildings, as well as the revolutionary advancements made by the firm - from the rapid growth his factories stimulated, to his own personal struggles as a new immigrant. This tour will be an exciting and entertaining way to explore Albert Kahn's Detroit!

Private Views: A Multi-faceted Collection and an Architectural Gem

This Private View will introduce docents to a multi-faceted collection of contemporary art and textiles formed over decades and displayed in an historic house.

The house had been owned by members of the **Caulkins Family** who owned **Pewabic Pottery**, which was the facility where **Mary Chase Stratton** made her very special Pewabic Tiles. The house has a Pewabic bathroom off the 1938 library which is a sampler of the iridescent tiles being produced at that time. The sink, as well as the towel bar holders and the toilet paper dispenser are made of Pewabic tile. The 1919 sunroom which includes much of the collectors' ethnographic material, is tiled in Pewabic bricks. There is also a Pewabic mosaic above the fireplace.

The collection has also been influenced by the collectors' travels incorporating **textiles and contemporary basketry** made by American and Japanese artists. The collection includes work by **Deborah Butterfield**, **Ursula von Rydingsvard**, **Martin Puryear**, **Charles Eames**, and numerous Detroit based artists.

The second stop on this afternoon out is the **John and Kathleen McLucas House** (1950) designed by architect **Alexander Girard**.

Girard is best known for his boldly-colored Herman Miller textiles. However, one could say that the McLucas House—with its wood and glass, single-story structure, open floor plan and bold color accents—represents the culmination of Girard's innovative/collaborative midcentury Detroit design projects. It is also the sole-surviving private residence designed by Girard.



◀ **Pewabic Pottery**, *Tile with View of Detroit Skyline*, between 1920 and 1950
Detroit Institute of Arts, Bequest of Dr. and Mrs. Charles W. Creaser, F70.290

Friday Excursions



Photo: Sigmunda (attributors: p.35)

Fish, Flowers, and Pottery: Belle Isle and Pewabic Pottery

The **Fish, Flowers and Pottery Tour** combines a visit to the Belle Isle Park, a 985-acre island in the center of the Detroit River designed by Frederick Law Olmsted with a tour of Pewabic Pottery.

Our excursion will include stops at: the **Belle Isle Aquarium**, the oldest aquarium in North America, featuring freshwater and saltwater fish; the **Anna Scripps Whitcomb Conservatory**, the oldest continually operating conservatory in the U.S., including a Palm House, a Tropical House and a Cactus House. Both were designed by Albert Kahn and opened in 1904.

These stops will be followed by a bus ride around the island to see other unique features of this urban wonder. We will close our excursion to Belle Isle at the **Oudolf Garden**, designed for sustainability with the use of native plants and intended to be beautiful at every time of the year.

Our outing will continue to **Pewabic Pottery**, one of the oldest continually operating potteries in the country. Working out of their National Historic Landmark studio Pewabic is an active working pottery, architectural tile studio, and ceramic arts education center.

Known for its iridescent glazes, Pewabic tile installations can be found across the United States including at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, Illinois, Comerica Park, home of the Detroit Tigers, five Detroit People Mover stations, Third Man Records (Detroit), stations for the Q-Line, the Detroit Institute of Arts and Herald Square in New York City.



Cranbrook Art Museum

A Memorable Day at Cranbrook

CRANBROOK EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY, founded in 1904, is one of the world's leading centers of education, science, and art. This 319-acre campus, a work of art in itself, features the work of world-renowned architects and sculptors including Albert Kahn, Eliel Saarinen and Frank Lloyd Wright, in "the most enchanted and enchanting setting in America".

Your day will include docent-led tours of:

- **Cranbrook House:** Designed by Detroit architect Albert Kahn in 1908 for the founders of Cranbrook, George and Ellen Scripps Booth, a National Historic Landmark.
- **Frank Lloyd Wright Smith House:** This Usonian style house was designed by Wright in 1941 for teachers Sara and Melvyn Smith.
- **Saarinen House:** Designed in the late 1920s, the Saarinen House is Eliel Saarinen's Art Deco masterpiece and served as the home and studio of the Finnish-American designer. A National Historic Landmark, the house showcases a fusion of Arts and Crafts craftsmanship and Art Deco elegance, featuring original furnishings and textiles designed by the Saarinen family.
- **Cranbrook Art Museum or Cranbrook Science Museum:** Free time to explore either museum on the Cranbrook campus. The museum of modern and contemporary art was one of the first contemporary art museums in United States. The science museum includes a planetarium, and an observatory.

Friday Excursions

The “Up, Down, Through, and Around” Detroit Music Tour

Photo: Dig Downtown Detroit (attributions: p.35)



THE UP, DOWN, THROUGH, and Around Detroit Music Tour combines sights and sounds in a guided, narrated journey that explores the people and places that created & shaped Detroit’s world-renowned music scene. The tour blends storytelling, live narration, and curated musical selections to bring Detroit’s musical legacy to life.

The tour travels to five of Detroit’s main streets, using the city itself as a living classroom.

Traveling along **Woodward Avenue** — America’s first paved highway — the tour uses this historic corridor as its central spine. Along this straight line, visitors

enter Detroit’s vibrant entertainment district views of the **Detroit Opera House** and the 1928 **Fox Theatre** originally billed as “the most magnificent Temple of Amusement in the World.”

The tour highlights Detroit’s art and cultural districts, including a special visit to **Third Man Records** founded by Jack White of The White Stripes in Midtown. Here, guests experience a unique behind-the-scenes look at how vinyl records are made and produced, connecting Detroit’s musical past with its present-day innovation.

The experience concludes with a stop at the **Motown Museum** for pictures and a visit to the book shop, where guests engage with the legacy of one of the most influential music institutions in the world as the museum undergoes renovation and expansion.

This final destination provides a fitting culmination to a tour that moves up, down, through, and around Detroit, celebrating the city as a global center of music, culture, and creativity.



Photo: Stephanie Hume (attributions: p.35)

Private Views: Two Worlds – Contemporary and American Folk Art

OUR EXCURSION WILL EXPLORE two unique and compelling collections.

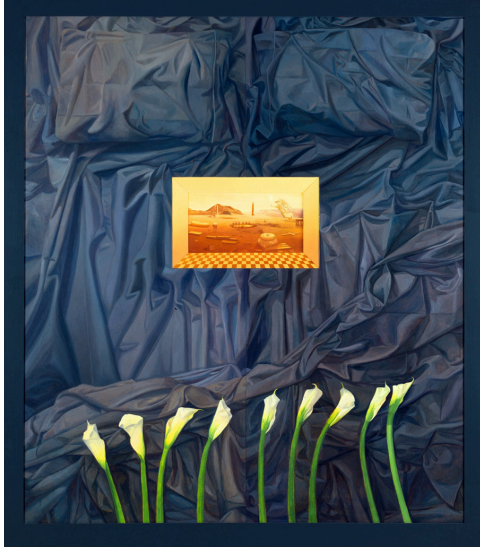
The first collection is focused on Contemporary Art which the Collectors have been working on since the mid-1990s. Their focus is on Contemporary Art and their tastes include Modern as well as Emerging works. The collection ranges from small to large paintings, sculpture, and furniture. Design plays a large influence in their process. The Collectors initially started with key pieces from the 1980's **Memphis Movement** and the collection includes five large-scale ceramic totems by Ettore Sottsass. Today, the count is hard to determine but it is estimated at 300 plus (and growing!). Artists represented in their holdings include Chris Burden, Ursula von Rydingsvard, Yoko Ono, The Gao Brothers, Magdalena Abakanowicz, Nam June Paik, Rob Pruitt, and Louise Nevelson. The Collectors are active in the Detroit art community as well as associations with Cranbrook Art Academy and the College for Creative Studies.

The second collection is a collection of **early American Folk Art** collected over more than 40 years. This collection is primarily of sculptural objects, but also includes paintings, both traditional and contemporary. The collectors have written two books about their canes and face jugs, so these objects are well represented in their home.

There are also whirligigs, trade signs, early American furniture as well as paintings by contemporary artists including Ramirez, Traylor, Yoakum and Hawkins.

Friday Excursions

Afternoon in Royal Oak: Artist Studios and Glass Gallery



OUR MORNING OUT in Royal Oak engages with working artists and a renowned gallery for artists working in glass.

Livernois Art Works is a collective artists studio started 25 years ago by owners John Rowland and Tim Thayer. We will have the opportunity to visit the studios of three artists: **John Rowland** is a sculptor who creates unique wall-based works; **Ed Fraga** is a painter whose works are in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Detroit Institute of Arts; and **Susan Goethel Campbell**, a printmaker who explores the boundaries of the medium, using dyes and organic materials that explore questions of the environment and changing climate issues.

Our morning out will include the **Hill Gallery**, celebrated for its focus on 20th-century art and rare American folk art. The gallery is owned and directed by Timothy and Pamela Hill. For more than four decades, Hill Gallery has maintained an active exhibition program, featuring numerous solo exhibitions by artists such as Mark di Suvero, Cy Twombly, Louise Bourgeois, Richard Pousette-Dart, Sean Scully, Nancy Graves, Allie McGhee, and many others.

Our next stop will be a visit to **Habatat Galleries**, the oldest and largest art gallery in the United States devoted exclusively to artists working with glass as their medium. The 16,000 sq. ft. gallery is the home of the original International Glass Invitational which, for 53 years, has introduced and exhibited the greatest artists working creatively with glass.

Since its inception in 1971, the gallery has played a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of contemporary glass art, hosting exhibitions featuring luminaries like Dale Chihuly and Klaus Moje. Habatat's global outreach, from organizing the first International Glass Exhibition in China to publishing Ferdinand Hampson's seminal work on the 50-year journey of studio glass in America, underscores its commitment to fostering a vibrant and interconnected community of glass enthusiasts.

▲ Ed Fraga, *La Santa E Gloriosa Carne*, 1993

Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase with funds from the Stroh Foundation, Andrew L. and Gayle Shaw Camden Contemporary and Decorative Arts Fund, and funds from Mr. and Mrs. Stanley R. Day, John W. Stroh III, Vivian W. Day, Martha Katz, Joy Emery, and Elizabeth Dumouchelle. 1996.2

Saturday Excursion

Photo: Quick fix (attributions: p.35)



Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History

The Town Square: a self-guided walking tour

WELCOME TO MIDTOWN'S Town Square, home to some of Detroit's most significant cultural attractions! Your afternoon in the Town Square will provide an introduction to the wide range of cultural institutions centered around the Detroit Institute of Arts. You will be amazed at the opportunities to see, learn and explore within steps of the DIA. In most of the venues, docents will be available to tour and answer your questions. Our neighbors include:

Detroit Public Library: Located across the street from the DIA, the 1921 Cass Gilbert designed Detroit Public Library is an elegant example of Italian Renaissance style. From its exterior decoration with classical frieze to its bronze entrance doors to its decorative murals, ironwork, stained glass and Pewabic tile, the library is an impressive work of art as well as a working library. You will have the opportunity to take a tour or roam the halls for your own discoveries.

Michigan Science Center: Explore hands on experiences in math, physics, medicine, aeronautics, music and road construction (it is Michigan!). With helpful labels you can experiment and learn. The museum philosophy is to use informal learning techniques that emphasize hands-on, minds-on interactivity through engaging exhibits, theater shows and programs.

Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History (The Wright): The Wright is one of the world's oldest and largest independent museums of African American history and culture. It holds the world's largest permanent collection of African American culture of more than 35,000 artifacts, The Wright's current 125,000-square-foot museum opened as the largest museum in the world dedicated

continued



Detroit Historical Museum

to African American history. The permanent exhibition *And Still We Rise* offers a comprehensive look at the history of African American resilience.

This long-term exhibition serves as the central experience of the museum. The 22,000-square foot exhibition contains more than 20 galleries to travel over time and across geographic boundaries.

Detroit Historical Museum: Learn about the deep and rich history of Detroit from the region’s First People to French settlers

to its transformation from a frontier town to an industrial powerhouse. Along the way you will learn about its music history and its sports prowess.

Scarab Club: The Scarab Club was founded in 1907 by a group of artists and art patrons. In its early days, the club sponsored sketching from a live model, art talks and lectures, parties and other social events, art exhibitions, and other activities — the same kind of activities found in today’s Scarab Club — to showcase local art and educate the community about art.

In October 1928, the current “clubhouse” opened its doors. The design, building construction, and architectural and decorative elements were all executed by the membership. Its idiosyncratic design, including the private walled garden, provides a unique setting for the artistic and social events for which the Scarab Club is famous.

Hellenic Museum: The Hellenic Museum’s permanent collection includes an assortment of Greek ephemera and history from the 19th and 20th centuries, including textiles, pottery, musical instruments, photos and documents. Exhibits address the history of Greektown, immigration, textiles and garments. The museum is housed in the Emory L. Ford House designed by John Scott & Company, built in 1912.

BasBlue: Established in 2021 in the heart of Midtown Detroit’s Cultural Center, BasBlue is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing economic mobility by providing valuable resources for personal and professional growth to underrepresented and under-resourced women and nonbinary individuals. BasBlue occupies a converted 12,000 sq. historic mansion which was resurrected from abandonment and provides collaborative meeting rooms, a wellness area, a bar, a lactation room, and event spaces.

Charles Lang Freer House: Built by industrialist and art collector, Charles Lang Freer, in 1892, the Freer House is a masterpiece of American shingle-style architecture and the birthplace of the Freer Gallery of Art (NMAA, Smithsonian) in Washington D.C. As an early champion of American, Asian, and Middle Eastern art, Freer’s legacy of multiculturalism is celebrated in the house’s mission and programming today. Today, the Freer House is the location for Wayne State University offices and meeting room facilities. Although the Freer House’s structure and finishes have evolved to suit institutional needs, much of its original grandeur and architectural character remain.

A special event at The Henry Ford, designed exclusively for NDS attendees!

Photo: ajefx - surresh | attribution: 0.35



Rosa Parks bus at the Henry Ford

STEP INTO A WORLD where past innovations fuel the imagination of generations to come. A vibrant exploration of genius in all its forms, The Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation showcases the American ideas that have fired our imaginations and changed our lives and allows you to experience the strides of America's greatest minds while fully immersing yourself in their stories. A unique opportunity for Symposium attendees, the museum will host a private dinner on Sunday evening and will remain open until 10:00 for the exclusive use of

NDS guests to explore the museum's one-of-a-kind collection.

Guests will enter the museum through Independence Hall – a detailed recreation of the Philadelphia landmark – where they will be greeted by fellow docents of The Henry Ford, who will give them a brief history of the museum and invite them to sip and stroll at their leisure. A plated dinner will follow in the heart of the museum under a 1939 Douglas DC-3 plane. After dessert guests will be free to explore the museum.

Travel back in history and view a humble cot, cooking, eating utensils, and other equipment that **George Washington** used when encamped on the field with his troops during the struggle for American independence.

Stand in quiet contemplation before the actual rocking chair that President **Abraham Lincoln** was sitting in at Ford's Theater when he was assassinated on the night of April 14, 1865.

Explore flight innovations, starting with the Wright brothers' achievements, which includes a replica of their 1903 **Wright Flyer**, and the 1928 Ford Tri-Motor Airplane as seen in Diego Rivera's Detroit Industry Murals at the DIA.

Marvel and imagine life in these spaces as you walk through Buckminster Fuller's circular **Dymaxion House**, a 1,000 square foot aluminum dome that was designed to solve the need for housing in a booming post war American in 1946. This is the only existing prototype.

Step inside and sit on the same bus where **Rosa Parks** took a stand for Civil Rights by taking a seat in 1955 and changed history forever.

The collection includes Stagecoaches, locomotives, cars galore, colonial furniture. The Henry Ford has the spectrum of American design and history waiting to be discovered as you wrap up your weekend in Detroit, with yet another of our world class museums. You'll be talking about this memorable experience long after the symposium has ended.

Breakout Sessions

Saturday 8:45-9:45

When the Going Gets Tough: Docent-initiated Strategies for Discussing Art with Sensitive Themes

Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh PA

Learn strategies for navigating sensitive topics in pieces of art with confidence! This interactive workshop shows how Carnegie docents engage visitors respectfully, spark meaningful discussions, and create joyful, thoughtful experiences—even with challenging social, political, or cultural themes.

Educate, Elevate & Inspire: Transforming Docent Training

National Gallery of Art, Washington DC

Discover how NGA turns docent training into an engaging, interactive experience! Learn strategies that build visual literacy, foster collaborative touring, and empower docents to connect visitors meaningfully with art—all while creating a supportive, creative learning community.

Roadmap to Object of the Month: Spotlighting Collections and Steering Art Conversations

Phoenix Museum of Art, Phoenix AZ

Discover how docents lead dynamic “Object of the Month” sessions! This workshop shows how to select artworks, craft interactive presentations, and engage visitors in rich, behind-the-scenes conversations that bring the collection to life.

Visual Thinking Strategies Facilitation and Discussion

St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis MO

Experience Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) firsthand! Participate in a VTS session to explore how it builds visual

literacy, deep listening, collaboration, and meaningful dialogue, followed by a discussion of facilitation techniques and research-backed benefits.

Partnering to Connect Art, Nature, and More in your Community

Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg FL

See how art and nature connect! Learn how MFA St. Petersburg partnered with a marine science center to turn an art exhibition into ongoing hands-on experiences in the galleries and the open waters of Tampa Bay—and leave inspired to create similar community collaborations.

The Playful Docent: Strategies for Engaging Young People with Art

The Clark Art Institute,
Williamstown MA

Learn to spark curiosity and joy in young learners! Explore The Clark Art Institute’s hands-on, multi-sensory programs for ages 3–5, and discover strategies to engage children through playful, meaningful art experiences.

Beyond Interpreting: When Providing a Hearing-Loss Interpreter Is Not the Answer

Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art,
Kansas City MO

“Excuse me?” “Could you repeat that, please?” “I didn’t quite catch that.” “Did you say this artist was a pig in their time?” Sound familiar? As docents we are not always aware of who in our tour group has a hearing loss. Learn practical strategies for engaging visitors with varying hearing abilities. This session shares communication tips and techniques to ensure everyone on your tour can enjoy and connect with the art.

Build a Tour from Scratch: Creating Themed Tours

High Museum of Art, Atlanta GA

Learn to design your own themed tour! This hands-on session shows how to create engaging tours—from holiday themes to “selfie” portrait explorations—while guiding you to plan and present a mini tour using selected artworks.

Saturday 10:00-11:00

Interpreting Contested Histories: A Legal-Anthropological Framework for Docent-Led Engagement

Iolani Palace, Honolulu HI

Learn how to navigate sensitive and contested histories with confidence! This session offers a legal-anthropological framework to help docents guide visitors through complex events—like Hawaii’s monarchy overthrow and subsequent annexation—while keeping discussions engaging and visitor-focused.

How to Learn to Love AI and Not Become a Docent-Bot!

Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo OH

Explore how Artificial Intelligence (AI) can boost your tours without taking over! This interactive session lets attendees test AI tools, discover what works (and what doesn’t), and learn how technology can enhance knowledge, performance, and the joy of guiding visitors.

Spotlight Talks: Rethinking the Docent-Led Tour

National Museum of Asian Art, Washington DC

Discover a fresh take on docent-led tours! Spotlight Talks let docents stay put while student groups rotate,

creating deeper engagement and smoother logistics. Learn how this flexible model benefits both visitors and docents, with practical tips to try it at your museum.

Art Beyond “What Do You See”: Pre-Planned Activities that Instruct and Inspire

Evansville Museum of Art, History and Science, Evansville IN

Discover fun, ready-to-use activities that make gallery visits engaging and educational! Designed for school groups but adaptable for all audiences, these tools help docents inspire curiosity and deeper interaction with art.

The Art Wheel Unpacked: A Model for Creating Consistent and Engaging Tours

Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City MO

Learn how to make adult tours interactive and engaging! This session introduces the Art Experience Wheel, a tool for crafting directed-looking questions that spark curiosity, guide discussion, and create dynamic, visitor-centered experiences.

Off the Wall Tours: Designing Creative Experiences for Visitors

San Antonio Museum of Art, San Antonio TX

What happens when you give docents the freedom to design public tours on any topic that interests them? You get an amazing variety of tours that visitors love! Off the Wall tours inspire visitor excitement, attract new audiences, and let docents share their passions in fun, engaging ways.

Breakout Sessions

Saturday 10:00-11:00

Sensory Experience Tours: Opening Our Doors to the Visually and Cognitively Impaired

The San Diego Museum of Art,
San Diego CA

Experience art through all the senses! This multi-sensory program combines storytelling, music, aromas, and tactile activities inspired by the artworks to engage visitors with visual or cognitive impairments. Learn how to create memorable, inclusive gallery experiences.

A Docent's Deep Dive: Pairing Historical and Contemporary Art for Powerful Conversations

New Britain Museum of American Art,
New Britain CT

See how pairing historical and contemporary art sparks curiosity and conversation! NBMAA docents created engaging online lessons that connect educators' social studies curriculum to art, inspiring inquiry, deeper understanding, and future museum visits.

Saturday 11:15-12:15

Truth and Reconciliation: Our Gallery Guides Journey through Unlearning in Their Approach to Indigenous Art

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto CAN

Learn how AGO Gallery Guides are rethinking how they present Indigenous art through the lens of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action. This session explores their journey of unlearning and shares practical examples of how it is shaping more thoughtful and meaningful conversations about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit art in the galleries.

What About the Big Kids: Art as a Lens to Culturally Responsive Lesson Plans for Teens

Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit MI

See how art can spark meaningful conversations with teens. This session shows how an honors-level African American Cultural Humanities high school course was transformed into a museum program that builds critical thinking through dialogue, historical connections, and student-led exploration of the DIA's powerful collection.

Spark an Interest in History

Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo OH

Bring history to life through art. Many works of art in our museum collections can be seen as primary historical sources—direct evidence with authentic stories about the past, created by those who experienced it firsthand. This interactive session shares techniques—role play, scavenger hunts, storytelling, and simple technology—that captivate audiences and turn museum visits into unforgettable historical adventures.

Power Your Council: Governance that Fuels Purpose and Performance

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art,
Hartford CT

This session showcases a sustainable governance model that boosts the four P's of Governance: Purpose, People, Process, and Performance—fostering transparency, engagement, and accountability for stronger, more effective teams.

Jump Start Connections between People and with Art Using Image Cards!

Taft Museum of Art, Cincinnati OH

Discover how simple image cards can

spark conversation and connection. Taft docents will share creative ways to engage visitors with art—and with each other—while exploring ideas for using this fun tool in your own museum.

Books at Bowers: Touring Through the Pages

Bowers Museum, Santa Ana CA

Discover the joy of pairing books with museum tours! This program combines reading and art (eight years of fiction and nonfiction, 50 books, 25 varied adjunct docent-led museum tour experiences), creating interactive experiences that spark curiosity, conversation, and a deeper appreciation of both literature and the museum's collection.

Embracing the Challenge of Change: 50 Years of Art in Bloom

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston MA

Celebrate 50 years of creativity and community! This session showcases how Art in Bloom evolved from a Ladies' Committee and Garden Club tradition into a vibrant, inclusive event that embodies MFA Boston's message: "Here All Belong."

Sparking Joy thru Docent Creativity: Special Topic Tours

Montana Museum of Art and Culture, Missoula MT

Create engaging, Special Topic Tours in this hands-on workshop. Work in small groups to develop a theme, choose related artworks from the Detroit Institute of Art's collection, build a narrative, and leave with a simple framework to design your own memorable museum experiences.

Sunday 8:15-9:15

Dealing with Loss, Death and Grieving as a Universal Experience

Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, San Juan PR

Explore how museums can support visitors experiencing grief. This session highlights guided tours using selected artworks to offer meaningful reflection while respecting individual needs and boundaries.

Listen to their Voices: The Importance of First Person Voices in Museum Tours

Heard Museum, Phoenix, AZ, and The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO

Learn how first-person voices can transform your tours. This session shows how to incorporate artists' and culture keepers' perspectives to create authentic, engaging, and meaningful experiences for any audience.

I Love to Do Research! That's All!

Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara CA

We offer opportunities for docents to choose artworks, conduct independent research, and share written findings on our docent website. How might this process enhance and enrich your program? We'll explore step-by-step actions to help you get started in your museum.

Portal to Success: Digital Resources and Tools for Research

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford CT

Explore the Wadsworth's online Docent Portal. Learn how this digital hub helps docents plan tours, research objects, access training, and share knowledge—providing tools any museum can use to boost volunteer performance and engagement.

Breakout Sessions

Draw on Your Creativity: Slow Down with Conscious Breathing, Seated Yoga, and Directed Writing and Drawing

Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk VA

Learn how to help visitors recharge and unlock their creativity by participating in mindful activities including gentle seated yoga, guided drawing, and “slow looking” techniques. No previous experience required; just bring your curiosity and a sense of humor. You’ll leave with a practical toolkit full of useful ideas.

Do We Have Jazz for You!

American Jazz Museum,
Kansas City MO

Explore the joyful, cerebral, and spiritual power of jazz music through listening, movement, and meditation. Discover how the global, cross-cultural evolution of American Jazz connects with other art forms throughout history.

Igniting Visitor Engagement with Interactive Tours

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art,
Kansas City MO

Boost your tours with dynamic, hands-on strategies. This interactive session offers practical techniques to engage visitors of all ages and leave your audiences inspired.

Performance Upgrade for Teen Tours

Denver Art Museum, Denver CO

Take your teen tours to the next level. Collaborate, refine, and test strategies to boost engagement and make your programs even more dynamic and impactful.

Monday 9:15-10:15

Art In Mind Tours

James Museum of Western and
Wildlife Art, St. Petersburg, FL

Discover how to create meaningful museum tours for visitors living with dementia. This session highlights practical strategies for pacing, communication, and sensory engagement to design inclusive, dignified, and memorable experiences for visitors and their caregivers.

New Approaches to Docent Recruitment & Training

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art,
Kansas City MO

Learn how the Nelson-Atkins Museum refreshed its docent program to attract and support a wider range of volunteers. This interactive discussion shares new recruitment strategies, training changes, successes, challenges, and lessons learned.

Training! The Crown Jewel for Docents!

High Museum of Art, Atlanta GA

Rediscover the power of great training. Through examples from the High Museum’s programs—from initial preparation to ongoing learning—this session will inspire renewed pride, empathy, and enthusiasm for the docent role.

Time for a Tune-Up! Maintenance for Strong Staff and Volunteer Relationships

Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix AZ

Are your staff-volunteer relationships running smoothly? Learn how to spot early warning signs of communication breakdowns and explore practical strategies to rebuild trust, strengthen

collaboration, and keep your program moving forward.

Mystery at the Museum: Kids, the Scientific Method, Basic Forensics, and an Art Thief! (grades 4-6)

Evansville Museum of Arts, History, and Science, Evansville IN

A work of art has been stolen—can your young detectives solve the case? Using the scientific method and basic forensic tools like handwriting, fingerprints, and ink chromatography, students follow the clues to catch the thief.

Transforming Professions with Deep Looking: Encouraging Empathy, Creativity, and Communication

Harn Museum of Art, Gainesville, FL

Explore how close looking at art can transform professional training. Learn how this program engages medical students—and how museums can partner with professionals in the community to foster empathy, social connection, and cross-cultural understanding.

Designing Tours for Adult Non-Arts Related Groups

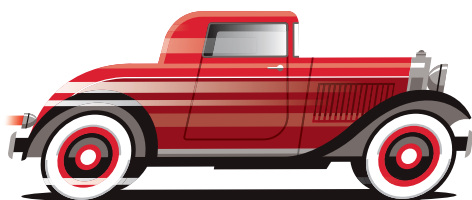
The Denno Museum Center, Traverse City MI

Discover how museum tours can enrich courses and professional training beyond the arts. This session shares strategies for creating value-added experiences that attract social science, science, and professional groups.

Family Art ADVENTURES: Bringing Laughter and Joy Inside the Museum

San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego CA

See how Family Art Adventures brings families together through art. Interactive tours connect visitors with select artworks and conclude with hands-on activities designed to spark creativity, curiosity, and shared fun.



Keynote Speakers

Self-portrait painting



MARIO MOORE,

a Detroit native, received a BFA from the College for Creative Studies, Detroit, MI in 2009 and an MFA in Painting from the Yale School of Art, New Haven, CT in 2013. Moore incorporates stories about his surroundings and explores the nature

of the past and present through history, art, politics and literature to complete his works. He is a recent Kresge Arts Fellow [2023] awarded through the Kresge Foundation and a recipient of the prestigious Princeton Hodder Fellowship [2018 – 2019] through Princeton University. He also has been awarded residencies at Duke University, Josef and Annie Albers Foundation, Fountainhead, and Knox College. Moore's work is in the permanent collections of but not limited to the Detroit Institute of Arts, Princeton University Art Museum, The Studio Museum in Harlem, the Mott-Warsh Collection, Louisiana State University Museum of Art, California African American Museum, Flint Institute of Art and The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center.

Moore's work has been widely exhibited, including at The Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI; The Lewis Center for the Arts at Princeton University, NJ; the Smart Museum of Art, Chicago, IL; Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, MI; David Klein Gallery, Detroit, MI; Jeffrey Deitch Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Arthur Roger Gallery, New Orleans, LA; The Cleveland Museum of Art, Colby College Museum of Art and the traveling Smithsonian Sites Exhibition, *Men of Change*.

Mario Moore / Enshrined: Presence & Preservation exhibition—Moore's first survey exhibition—opened at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit in June 2021 and traveled to the California African American Museum (CAAM) in March 2022, (his first solo exhibition on the West Coast). Moore's most recent traveling museum exhibition, *Revolutionary Times* opened at the Flint Institute of Arts in January 2024 and closed at the Grand Rapids Art Museum in August 2024. In January 2026, Moore's exhibition *In Pursuit of Home* opened at the Harvey B Gantt Center for African American Arts & Culture in Charlotte, NC. Mario Moore currently works and lives in Detroit, MI.

photo by Katie Severson



KEVIN ADKISSON,

Curator at Cranbrook Center for Collections and Research, will open the symposium with a lively introduction to Detroit and southeastern Michigan told through its architecture. Detroit is a byword both for the automotive industry and

for postindustrial decline, and its architecture reflects cycles of innovation, collapse, and restless reinvention. Within the intensity of industrial power and decline, architects in Detroit gave shape to the built environment of the modern age.

Adkisson earned a B.A. in Architecture from Yale University, where he developed a passion for design history while working in the Yale University Art Gallery's Furniture Study. He later completed an M.A. in American Material Culture through the Winterthur Program. Before joining Cranbrook, he worked at Robertam Stern Architects in New York as a research and writing associate and at Kent Bloomer Studio in New Haven designing and fabricating architectural ornament.

At Cranbrook, Adkisson works across the National Historic Landmark campus interpreting its buildings, landscapes, and collections—including Cranbrook House, the 1908 Arts and Crafts home of founders George and Ellen Booth designed by Albert Kahn; Saarinen House, the 1930 Art Deco masterpiece designed by Eliel and Loja Saarinen for Cranbrook Academy of Art; and the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Smith House, an art-filled 1950 Usonian house for schoolteachers Melvyn and Sara Smith.

Adkisson's curatorial commitment is grounded in the belief that anyone, of any age or background, can find inspiration and insight by looking closely at architecture and material culture. He pairs scholarly depth with accessibility and humor, helping audiences see not only the beauty of objects and buildings, but the ideas, aspirations, and social contexts that produced them. For docents, his practice offers a powerful model of how interpretation transforms collections into conversations linking past and present through curiosity and care.

General Information

Conference Check-in

On arrival, please check in at the registration table in the Marriott Motor Lobby located on the 1st Floor.

Here you will receive your conference program, conference materials, and your ID badge.

Conference check-in times are posted in the Conference at a Glance.

Driving and Parking

Parking is available at the Beaubien Place Garage, 238 Beaubien Street, Detroit. The garage offers in-and-out privileges to guests for a flat rate of \$25 per day and can be charged to guest rooms. Valet parking is also available for \$30 daily/\$40 overnight.

Airport Transit

The Detroit Marriott is not serviced by public transit from DTW Airport.

Transportation is available by taxi or rideshare options such as Uber or Lyft. (Cost is approximately \$50-\$70 depending on time of day and type of car.) These services can be accessed by following the signs for “ground transportation services” at either terminal. The drive from the airport to hotel is approximately 30 minutes.

Metro Cars offers private car service with multiple vehicle options. This can be booked in advance; cost is approximately \$100.

Link: www.metrocars.com

Transportation during the Symposium

Bus transportation is provided for all excursions, travel to the DIA and dinner at The Henry Ford.

What to Wear

Business casual is appropriate for all activities, but some may wish to dress for the evening dinners at the museums.

Average temperatures in Detroit in November range from mid 30s to high 40s with rain in the forecast. When the weather is better or worse a Michigander will say “that’s Michigan.” As the conference approaches, keep your eye on the forecast and plan for an umbrella. All tours are rain or shine.

Please remember to wear comfortable, flat-soled walking shoes on tours. Shoe covers or removal of shoes may be required at some excursion sites.

Photography

Exterior photography is permitted at all tour sites unless otherwise stated, provided it does not interfere with the tour schedule and is for private non-commercial use only. Staff will advise when interior photography is permitted.

General Policies

All programs and tours are subject to change. No smoking is allowed on tours or symposium events. Guests are not to use restrooms at private houses without explicit permission.

Disclaimer

The National Docent Symposium Council (NDSC) and the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) assume no responsibility for any injury, loss, or other damage to any person or property occurring in relation to any activity connected to or arising out of this Symposium or any events or tours associated herewith.

Releases

Each person participating in any activity related to this Symposium hereby releases the NDSC, the DIA and all cooperating organizations and related individuals from any and all suits, demands or claims for injury (including death), loss, or other damage arising out of or occurring in connection with that activity. Photography: Your registration constitutes implied consent to be photographed and to have those photos published with non-personal identification.

Registration

Cancellations and no-shows are not reimbursed. Reservations may be transferred unchanged to another participant with notification to the DIA no later than October 20, 2026. Tours and events have capacity limits.

Acknowledgements

The organizers of the 2026 National Docent Symposium extend sincere thanks to the many individuals and organizations whose support has made this gathering possible.

We are especially grateful to the institutions that have opened their doors to our participants, and to the private collectors welcoming us into their homes and studios. Our heartfelt thanks also go to the many volunteers whose time, talent, and dedication—both in the months leading up to the symposium and throughout the event—have been invaluable.

We are equally appreciative of our fellow docents and scholars, whose willingness to share their knowledge and insights—through sessions, discussions, and both formal and informal exchanges—enriches the experience for all.

This symposium is a shared achievement, made possible by the enthusiasm, collaboration, and spirit of a remarkable community. We extend our sincere thanks to the Detroit Institute of Arts, whose financial and in-kind support, and staff across multiple departments, provided invaluable assistance at every stage, from concept to execution. We are especially grateful to Phil Rivera, Director of Volunteer Services and Gabi Sander-Meyer for their support and guidance.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Kay Buckner-Seal	Amy Freundl	Rena Friedberg	Stephen Gale
Dave Galli	Mark Habel	Michelle Kendell	Lisa Mason
Kathleen McBroom	Dorothy Menefee	Alesia Morris	Barbara Quilty
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(This list is current as of April 2026.)

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BasBlue, Detroit
Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit
Cranbrook Educational Community, Bloomfield Hills
Detroit Historical Museum, Detroit
Edsel & Eleanor Ford Estate, Grosse Pointe
Habatat Galleries, Royal Oak
Henry Ford Fairlane Estate, Dearborn
Michigan Science Center, Detroit
Pewabic Pottery, Detroit
The Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation, Dearborn
The Shepherd, Detroit
Wayne State University Art Department, Detroit

Arab American Museum, Dearborn
Belle Isle Aquarium, Detroit
Charles Lang Freer House, Detroit
Detroit Cultural Center Association, Detroit
Detroit Public Library, Detroit
Ford Motor Company Rouge Plant, Dearborn
Hellenic Museum of Detroit, Detroit
Little Village Community & Cultural Arts Center, Detroit
Motown Museum, Detroit
The Art Newspaper, London
The Scarab Club, Detroit
Toledo Art Museum, Toledo
Zekelman Holocaust Center, West Bloomfield

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Page 4: Spirit of Detroit and the Renaissance Center
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