

PRESS RELEASE

MARCH 12, 2020

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SEATTLE ART MUSEUM (SAM) TEMPORARILY CLOSES ALL THREE SITES THROUGH END OF MARCH



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SEATTLE, WA - The Seattle Art Museum (SAM) announced today the temporary closure of its three sites—the Seattle Art Museum, the Asian Art Museum, and the PACCAR Pavilion at the Olympic Sculpture Park—effective Friday, March 13, in order to support Seattle’s efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19. The temporary closure will extend through March 31, with any further program or operational updates announced as the museum monitors the evolving situation.

“The safety and well-being of our staff, volunteers, and visitors are always our highest priorities,” says Amada Cruz, SAM’s Illsley Ball Nordstrom Director and CEO. “Over the last weeks, we’ve been closely monitoring the situation, implementing preventative measures, and preparing for all contingencies. We make this decision today to safeguard the health and safety of our community, knowing that we are all in this together.”

SAM has continually followed the recommendations of US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Public Health Seattle & King County, including conducting increased cleanings of high-touch and high-traffic areas, such as entryways and elevators; providing additional hand sanitizers at all locations; and sharing up-to-date information with its staff, volunteers, and visitors. On Monday, SAM canceled or postponed all museum events through March 31, 2020, in line with the current recommendations from public health officials on social distancing.

In light of the new directives issued by Governor Inslee’s office, SAM made the decision to close all three sites, including the downtown Seattle Art Museum, the newly renovated Asian Art Museum in Volunteer Park, and the PACCAR Pavilion building at the Olympic Sculpture Park. The outdoor environs of the sculpture park will remain open and free to the public. The SAM Shop, SAM Gallery, and TASTE Café will also be closed.



While temporarily closed to the public through March 31, the museum will pay all its employees, including its frontline staff, who are normally scheduled to work during this time their regular wages.

Visitors who have a ticket to the museum or for an event which has been canceled or postponed may exchange their ticket or receive a refund on request. Due to staffing limits during the museum's temporary closure, SAM's Customer Service Center will be unable to check voicemails regularly, but visitors can contact customerservice@seattleartmuseum.org with any requests or questions.

Photo credit: Benjamin Benschneider.

ABOUT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. SAM was founded in 1933 with a focus on Asian art. By the late 1980s the museum had outgrown its original home, and in 1991 a new 155,000-square-foot downtown building, designed by Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and rededicated as the Asian Art Museum in 1994, and it reopened on February 8, 2020 following an extensive renovation and expansion. SAM's desire to further serve its community was realized in 2007 with the opening of two stunning new facilities: the nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park (designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architects)—a “museum without walls,” free and open to all—and the Allied Works Architecture designed 118,000-square-foot expansion of its main, downtown location, including 232,000 square feet of additional space built for future expansion. The Olympic Sculpture Park and SAM's downtown expansion celebrated their tenth anniversary in 2017.

From a strong foundation of Asian art to noteworthy collections of African and Oceanic art, Northwest Coast Native American art, European and American art, and modern and contemporary art, the strength of SAM's collection of approximately 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures, and time periods.