OLYMPIC SCULPTURE PARK

MAP & GUIDE
WELCOME TO SEATTLE ART MUSEUM’S OLYMPIC SCULPTURE PARK

SEATTLE’S GREEN SPACE FOR ART AND PEOPLE

The award-winning Olympic Sculpture Park is downtown Seattle’s largest green space. Free and open to the public, the sculpture park provides a welcoming outdoor space year-round for everyone to experience art and the natural beauty of the Northwest. Wander the park to discover sculptures among native plants, dip your toes in Elliott Bay, or bike along the waterfront, taking in stunning views over Puget Sound to the Olympic Mountains. Stroll along the 2,200-foot Z-shaped path that zigzags from the pavilion to the water’s edge to tour the park and its surroundings.

“We aspired to create a sculpture park at the intersection of the city and the water, and to define a new model for bringing art to the public,” said Marion Weiss of Weiss/Manfredi, the lead designers for the park.

As a former industrial site, the sculpture park’s nine acres have undergone extensive restoration, achieving a range of environmental goals including brownfield redevelopment, creation of a Chinook salmon habitat and a pocket beach, extensive use of native plantings, and the capture and use of onsite rainwater. The sculpture collection features major works by influential artists from the past half-century up to the present day. Temporary art installations during summer months add vibrancy and an element of surprise to the park experience.

The Olympic Sculpture Park was made possible by a public and private partnership that began with a collaboration between the Seattle Art Museum and the Trust for Public Land. With the engagement of these partners and many generous private and public contributions, the park has transformed our waterfront and become a vibrant gathering space for the city.

The Olympic Sculpture Park was created and is operated by the Seattle Art Museum (SAM), a premier center for visual arts in the Pacific Northwest. SAM’s diverse and lively programs enrich connections between art and life for all ages and interests. Visit our website to find out what’s happening at the sculpture park and at our other two locations, the Seattle Art Museum in downtown and the Seattle Asian Art Museum in Volunteer Park.

visitsam.org

At the Seattle Art Museum, located downtown, one block from Pike Place Market, light-filled galleries invite you to wander through global art collections, temporary installations, and special exhibitions from around the world. Our collections include African, Meso-American, Ancient Mediterranean, Islamic, European, Oceanic, Asian, American, and modern and contemporary art. Visitors from out of town especially enjoy our remarkable Native American galleries featuring Northwest Coast art.

The Seattle Art Museum is one mile south of the Olympic Sculpture Park. Just follow First Avenue to Union Street.

The newly renovated and expanded Asian Art Museum, which reopened in February, 2020, breaks boundaries to offer a thematic, rather than geographic or chronological, exploration of art from the world’s largest continent. The restoration of the historic Art Deco building, improvements to critical systems, expanded gallery and education spaces, and a new park lobby that connects the museum to the surrounding Volunteer Park are just some of the ways the Asian Art Museum has been transformed and preserved as a cultural and community resource for future generations.
The Olympic Sculpture Park opened in January 2007, the astounding result of a major partnership between SAM and the Trust for Public Land to reclaim downtown Seattle’s last undeveloped waterfront property as a public space for art. SAM had resolved to return the site as much as possible to a functioning ecosystem, while providing a unique setting for outdoor sculpture and public recreation.

This was no small task given the site’s history. Starting in 1910, the grounds that would become the Olympic Sculpture Park were operated as a fuel-storage and transfer facility, activities that contaminated the soil and groundwater. The project’s lead designers, Weiss/Manfredi, developed an innovative Z-shaped configuration to connect three parcels of land into a series of four distinct landscapes. This design afforded a wide range of environmental restoration processes, including brownfield redevelopment, salmon habitat restoration, native plantings, and sustainable design strategies.

With these and other efforts, SAM improved habitat along the shoreline, enhanced public access to the Puget Sound waterfront, and created a dynamic, beautiful park that is one of Seattle’s most acclaimed public spaces.

The Seattle Art Museum acknowledges that the Olympic Sculpture Park was built on the ancestral lands of the Coast Salish people. Indigenous peoples have inhabited the Pacific Northwest for at least 12,000 years, with oral histories placing them here since the beginning of time, when the Changer Beings were sent by the Creator to shape the landscape, distinguish the humans from the animals, and provide humans with what they need to survive. To recognize the original inhabitants of this land, many plants in the meadows, valleys, and groves within the park are labeled with descriptions of Indigenous uses, and identified in Lushootseed, the language of the Indigenous peoples of Puget Sound.
SAM proudly supports a healthy and sustainable green space through incorporation of native plants in the park, monthly beach cleanups by volunteers, reduction of chemicals and pesticides in our landscaping, and efficient irrigation with a time- and weather-based watering system. We make it easy for visitors and staff members to recycle waste, to compost food and plant material, and to use public transit, carpooling, or bicycles to get to the park.
THE PACCAR PAVILION AND THE VALLEY

Adjacent to the PACCAR Pavilion and the Gates Amphitheater, the Valley is an evergreen forest most typical of the Northwest’s lowland coastal regions, featuring tall conifers such as fir, cedar, and hemlock, and flowering shrubs and trees associated with moist conditions. Living examples of ancient trees once native to Washington, such as the gingko and majestic metasequoia (dawn redwood), are also found here. Flowering perennials, ground covers, and ferns define the forest’s edges and pathways.

Ellsworth Kelly arrives at his work through prolonged observations of nature and distilling his insights and sensations into simple lines, planes, and forms. Although its silhouette at first appears abstract, Curve XXIV suggests an autumn ginkgo leaf or a billowing sail.

The Olympic Sculpture Park is proud to host exciting temporary installations in the park throughout the year. Rotating art installations enliven the PACCAR Pavilion and the 2,200-foot path that zigzags from the pavilion to the water’s edge.

Rickey, one of the pioneers who brought motion to abstract sculpture, builds on the innovations of American peers Alexander Calder and David Smith. Mixing subtle lyricism with industrial materials, his Two Plane Vertical Horizontal Variation III is a mature example of the artist’s kinetic sculpture.
Louise Nevelson
*Sky Landscape I*, 1976–83

Here Nevelson translates her collage approach from wood, a material she favored, to metal, a material she incorporated later in her career. This work features two totemic elements extending to the sky and accented by curved metal. Though three-dimensional, *Sky Landscape I* reflects Nevelson’s devotion to relief sculpture and to the drama available in a shallow field.

Beverly Pepper
*Perre’s Ventaglio III*, 1967

One of the first sculptors of her generation to be captivated by industrial materials, Pepper achieved a cool objectivity in *Perre’s Ventaglio III*, with its sleek, manufactured appearance. Light heightens the optical effect of the sculpture, its surface reflecting the surrounding environment. *Persephone Unbound*, which alludes to the mythic queen of the underworld who was bound to that subterranean world for one-third of each year, evokes a sense of timelessness and gravity, freedom and eternity.
Ginny Ruffner
*Mary’s Invitation: A Place to Regard Beauty*, 2014

Commissioned by the Seattle Art Museum in memory of Mary Shirley, one of the most passionate supporters and key benefactors of the Seattle Art Museum’s Olympic Sculpture Park, *Mary’s Invitation* has a joyousness in design that reflects Mary’s enthusiastic love of life and art. She was very fond of Ginny Ruffner and her work, and the artist responded to this commission with a tribute of her own—an invitation for visitors to linger and enjoy the sweeping views of the park, its stellar artworks, and the spectacular scenery of Puget Sound.

the Kreielsheimer North Meadow and the West Meadow

This meadow landscape, with expanses of grasses and wildflowers, meets the sidewalks to achieve a “fenceless” park, providing flexible sites for sculpture.

Mark di Suvero
*Bunyon’s Chess*, 1965

The crisscrossing steel beams of Di Suvero’s *Bunyon’s Chess*—broad brushstrokes drawn in space—formed a new vocabulary in sculpture when this piece was made. Created specifically for outdoor presentation in Seattle, the artwork makes wood a prominent element, a counterpoint to its structure of stainless steel.

Alexander Calder
*The Eagle*, 1971

American sculptor Calder studied mechanical engineering before studying art. *The Eagle* reveals the artist’s distinctive combination of pragmatism and poetry. Architectural in its construction and scale, it displays its curving wings, assertive stance, and pointy beak in a form that is weightless, colorful, and abstract.
**Roy McMakin**  
*Untitled*, 2004–7

*Untitled* is a playful group of three seating elements, creating a witty dialogue among unlikely surfaces on which to sit: an awkward concrete bench, a weather-resistant form based on a banker’s box, and a generic lawn chair cast in bronze. These sculptural objects capture McMakin’s sense of visual play and physical humor, in which things are not what they appear to be.

**THE HENRY AND WILLIAM KETCHAM FAMILIES GROVE**

The Grove is a forest of native aspen that defines the park’s transition from city to shore. Although most closely associated with the dry landscape east of the Cascade Mountains, native aspen are also found in dry coastal sites in the Puget Sound region. The Grove, with its understory of native currant and iris, dramatically reflects the changing seasons, in contrast to the continually green Valley.

**Tony Smith**  

*Stinger* recalls an ancient structure, inviting the viewer to cross a threshold to its interior. Composed of cross sections of tetrahedral and octahedral shapes and resting on a point, it appears to hover above the ground. Originally called “One Gate,” Smith ultimately titled *Stinger* after the cocktail—sweet but slyly intoxicating. In creating *Wandering Rocks*, Smith, who began his career as an architect, was inspired by molecular and crystalline forms and compelled by a belief in archetypal symbolism. The sculpture’s five-part structure pays homage to the Ryōan-ji Zen garden in Kyoto, Japan.
Fernández’s glass bridge invites viewers to take cover and to look down to the railroad below through images of changing skies. In Fernández’s saturated color photographs, sandwiched in glass, and in the relationship of the bridge to its setting, one recognizes how images of nature influence the way we perceive it.

THE SHORE
At the Shore, plantings were designed to support habitat for salmon recovery as well as to enhance public access and generate interest in the Puget Sound’s distinct shoreline ecosystem. The naturally developing tidal garden features kelp, algae, and other intertidal-zone plants that are revealed and concealed with the changing tides.

Louise Bourgeois' enigmatic Eye Benches are both giant all-seeing eyes and comfortable outdoor seating. The three sets of two benches are distinguished from one another by variations in scale, form, and detailing. Louise Bourgeois created Father and Son specifically for the Olympic Sculpture Park. As the fountain’s water rises and falls, father and son, each in turn, are engulfed in water and separated. It’s an impossible and poignant situation, as the two face each other with arms outstretched, striving to overcome the divide.
One of the world’s foremost sculptors, Plensa modeled *Echo* on the 9-year-old daughter of a restaurant owner near the artist’s studio in Barcelona. The sculpture’s title references Echo, the mountain nymph from Greek mythology, who offended the goddess Hera. To punish Echo, Hera deprived the nymph of speech, except for the ability to repeat the last words of another. In this monumental sculpture, over 46 feet tall, *Echo* listens with her eyes closed or in a state of meditation. She faces Puget Sound in the direction of Mount Olympus, visible from land and water.

*Schubert Sonata*, with its ribbon of raw metal, is part of a series dedicated to composers. Delineated by organic and geometric forms and spinning upon its single point, this work is a reflection of Di Suvero’s long-standing interest in the possibilities for motion in sculpture.

Commissioned specifically for the Olympic Sculpture Park, *Love & Loss* features benches that are functional and meaningful. A tree forms the v of “Love,” which blossoms and loses its leaves seasonally, a reminder of nature’s cycles, which mirror human experience.
THE BARRY ACKERLEY FAMILY EAST MEADOW

Across Elliott Avenue from the North and West Meadows, the East Meadow is a sloping field of grass and wildflowers designed to create a regenerative landscape as a setting for sculpture.

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Mark Dion
*Neukom Vivarium*, 2004–6

The *Neukom Vivarium* is a hybrid work of sculpture, architecture, environmental education, and horticulture. This 60-foot-long nurse log, with its ongoing cycles of decay and renewal, represents the complex processes of a natural ecosystem. Visitors observe life forms within the log using microscopes and magnifying glasses supplied in a cabinet designed by the artist. Illustrations of potential log inhabitants—bacteria, fungi, lichen, plants, and insects—decorate blue and white tiles that function as a field guide.

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Roxy Paine
*Split*, 2003

Paine’s stainless-steel sculpture evolved from analysis of a tree’s structure through drawings, computer diagrams, and architectural renderings. The cantilevered branches are made of more than 20 different diameters of steel pipes, weighing a surprising 5,000 pounds. *Split* reflects and contrasts with its surroundings and asks: What is nature; what is art?
INSIDE THE PACCAR PAVILION

Rotating art installations and a variety of educational activities enliven this open space with a spectacular view. Free WiFi is available.

CAFÉ

A seasonal café in the Olympic Sculpture Park’s PACCAR Pavilion offers food and beverage options for park visitors. Hours may vary; check our website for more information.

OCCASIONS AND CELEBRATIONS

Provide an art-filled backdrop for your next occasion. The Olympic Sculpture Park is the only venue in Seattle that provides world-class sculpture alongside Elliott Bay and a view of the Olympic Mountains. Learn more about venue experiences for your next important occasion.

venues@seattleartmuseum.org
206.654.3140

PACCAR PAVILION GARAGE

Pay parking is available in the PACCAR Pavilion garage. The entrance to the parking garage is on the southeast corner of the park at Broad Street and Western Avenue. Open daily from 6 am to 10 pm. No overnight parking.
EVERY SEASON AT THE SCULPTURE PARK

SITE, SCULPTURE, SHORELINE
Experience the Olympic Sculpture Park's dynamic spaces and learn about the design and layout of the park, site history, selected sculptures, and more!
Docent tours are on hold indefinitely for the time being.

SUMMER AT SAM
Visit the Olympic Sculpture Park for Summer at SAM! Check out new, ephemeral art that will introduce you to local artists and their interaction with wide-open spaces. July and August host opportunities to engage in local art and the environment. Come see the park in the most beautiful time of the year, and get your dose of outdoor art.

WINTER IN THE PARK
In the chill of winter, see the park lit up by the glow of luminaria at our SAM Lights event. Our monumental sculptures transform the landscape in the cooler months when Winter Weekends brighten up the park. Rain or shine, there is fun and free art-related programming here in the pavilion for children and adults alike to enjoy.

See our online calendar for specific dates, times, and event details.
visitsam.org/calendar

FOR EDUCATORS & FAMILIES

SCHOOL TOURS

School tours at the Olympic Sculpture Park are offered in spring. Schedule your tour and learn more about the park’s resources.

tours@seattleartmuseum.org
206.654.3183

DRAWING FROM NATURE (Grades K–12)

Modern art and nature intersect at the Olympic Sculpture Park! Students have the opportunity to practice observational skills and critical thinking in an outdoor museum. Through inquiry-based teaching and hands-on activities, students will discover the park’s diverse ecosystems, unique design, and monumental sculptures.

EDUCATOR RESOURCES

Contact the Ann P. Wyckoff Educator Resource Center (ERC) for books, images, and curriculum materials related to the Olympic Sculpture Park.

erc@seattleartmuseum.org

TINY TREES PRESCHOOL

Tiny Trees Preschool at the Olympic Sculpture Park is a collaboration between Tiny Trees Outdoor Preschool and the Seattle Art Museum. This preschool has a strong focus on art and play-based education. The sculpture park is utilized as a classroom Monday–Friday mornings.

tinytrees.org
familyprograms@seattleartmuseum.org
FOR THE LOVE OF ART

ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

• Unlimited free admission to the Seattle Art Museum, the Seattle Asian Art Museum, and the Olympic Sculpture Park.
• Invitations to members-only previews and events for special exhibitions.
• 10% discount at SAM Shop and TASTE Café.
• Discounts on Remix, film series tickets, lectures, and other museum programs.

Memberships start at $79.
visitsam.org/join
206.654.3210

GIVE TO THE SAM FUND

The SAM Fund provides vital support to the museum’s three locations including the Olympic Sculpture Park. Gifts of any amount make a lasting impact, helping SAM provide free programs for children and adults, promote native habitat, and preserve more than 20 iconic sculptures. You can give to the SAM Fund today. Look for the cash donation box in the PACCAR Pavilion or contact us.

visitsam.org/donate
206.654.3177

ADD YOUR NAME TO THE OLYMPIC OUTLOOK

Honor someone special in your life with an inscription on the Olympic Outlook, an elegant etched-steel railing that lines the Elliott Bay waterfront.

When you make a contribution of $1,000 or more to the SAM Fund, you can add the name of your choice to the Olympic Outlook and show your support for SAM.

visitsam.org/olympicoutlook
206.654.3177

Thank you for helping us sustain the arts in our community today and for generations to come.
**PARK HOURS**
Opens 30 minutes before sunrise
Closes 30 minutes after sunset

**PACCAR PAVILION HOURS**
April–October
Wednesday–Monday    10 am–5 pm
November–March
Wednesday–Sunday    10 am–5 pm

The Olympic Sculpture Park is smoke-free.

To ensure a safe and enjoyable visit for everyone, please observe the following rules:

- Please no touching or climbing on the sculptures, and no active sports.
- Walk bicycles, rollerblades, and skateboards through the park.
- Please enjoy, but do not disturb, the plant life.
- Keep dogs on a six-foot leash, and clean up after them.
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis are prohibited.
- Approval required for commercial photos/videos and group gatherings.
- No trespassing, loitering, or camping.
- Please respect social distancing guidelines.

**ACCESSIBILITY**
The park’s Z path and waterfront pathways are wheelchair accessible. For a full listing of services for visitors with disabilities, please go to visitsam.org or call 206.654.3123 (voice) or 206.654.3137 (TTY).

**BICYCLE RACKS AT THE PARK**
Bicycle racks are located in the garage, near the *Father and Son* fountain on the Alaskan Way Plaza, and on Western Avenue on the corner of Broad Street.