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Joslyn Art Museum Debuts New Art Exploration Space

Omaha, NE – Joslyn Art Museum announces the grand opening of a new, 1,500 square foot interactive space — Art Works: A Place for Curiosity. Visitors young and old — and everyone in between — will find fun, fresh ways to experience the visual arts at Art Works. Nine hands-on activity stations, all with direct and innovative connections to Joslyn’s permanent collection, pique curiosity and stimulate creativity. Opportunities to explore everything from portraiture to American Indian beadwork, Greek pottery to painting, are presented in formats from traditional low-tech (pencil and paper) to custom hi-tech (digital canvases connected to social media). Activities are designed to provide unique experiences, time and again.

Every nuance of Art Works engages visitors with Joslyn’s permanent collection, which spans centuries, reflects different cultures, and introduces varying perspectives. Connecting with the collection through Art Works, visitors will come away with a deeper, more personal understanding of works they see in the galleries as well as the depth and history of human creativity as expressed through art.

Located on the east end of the lower level in the Museum’s Memorial building, Art Works is a free, drop-in space, open during all public hours. Following a private preview period for Joslyn members last month, Art Works opened to the public on Friday, November 28. The new space is a permanent addition to Joslyn’s offerings for visitors.

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Art Works: Concept

While managed by staff and volunteers there to welcome visitors and provide guidance, Art Works is designed to be intuitive and largely open-ended, with guests encouraged to explore at their own pace and according to their own interests. Museums have long played a significant role in facilitating family learning, offering a unique context in which families can spend quality time together, talk with one another, and draw upon individual and collective experiences and memories to make sense of the world around them. At Joslyn, Art Works engages the varied interests of family members during a Museum visit, allows children to interact socially at the Museum with other children and adults, and serves as a place that is responsive to new ideas and discoveries for both visitors and staff.

“Art Works represents a giant step forward in how those here in Omaha, and our visitors from around the world, can connect and engage with art,” said Jack Becker, Joslyn executive director and CEO. “It stands out among centers of exploration within art museums in that all aspects of the space relate directly to Joslyn’s collection. The activities are designed to be universally appealing, inviting participation and cultivating curiosity. Everyone can enjoy the space — families, young children, teens, and adults. The possibilities in Art works are endless, and we are deeply grateful to the Weitz family for making this possible.”

Art Works: The Room

The Art Works space is arranged by distinct activity stations with central island work tables of Pearwood and Corian for art-making. Clean, curved lines mark the room that is white and Joslyn “hot green.” The floor is a combination of green rubber and cork. The walls near each station feature vinyl applications of abstracted designs reflecting works in Joslyn’s collection and the station theme. Seating includes a curved upholstered bench, upholstered reading nooks, orange triangular stools, modern gray chairs, and even two high chairs for the youngest visitors. Two display walls feature blue Lucite shelves and clips for showcasing 3D and 2D works created and left by visitors.

Art Works: The Activity Stations

The Art Works activity stations are named for Barbara and Wally Weitz, their children and grandchildren. Each station is custom made, many by local fabricators, to reflect Joslyn’s collection and its art education mission. The stations work on one level for individuals, with different possibilities for multiple visitors. “Many of the activities were designed so that more possibilities open up when people work together,” said Nancy Round, Joslyn’s director of education and outreach. “Engaging children and adults together in the space is key. For different generations to talk about art and make something together, whether they know one another or not, is a hallmark of Art Works. It changes attitudes surrounding visits to the Museum and makes art more personal and relatable, while building community.”

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Art Works: A Place for Curiosity at Joslyn Art Museum

The Art Works stations:

**Spectrum Sculpture**
Color and light bring this dazzling tower to life! Participants choose which colorful, acrylic shapes to lock together so the collaborative, glowing 3D wonder never looks the same twice. The pieces may be added in infinite ways, creating a sculpture that grows out, up, and down around the core structure.
Collection connection: Dale Chihuly’s *Inside & Out*
Fun Fact: the Spectrum Sculpture is 11’ 4” high

**Animation Station**
Make a stop-motion animation! Visitors choose from Joslyn's artful settings (first up: Grant Wood’s *Stone City, Iowa* and Jackson Pollock’s *Galaxy*) and props — or make their own — and photograph a story, bit by bit. See the completed mini-animation on the “big screen,” email it, or post it on Facebook with the embedded tag “I created this at Joslyn Art Museum! #JAMartworks”.
Collection connections: digital media arts such as Jennifer Steinkamp’s *Judy Crook, 2*; exploration of narrative and storytelling; landscapes (and other works in the collection) become the setting
Fun Fact: two tablets featuring custom software will guide visitors in the set-up and taking of multiple photographs (enough to result in a short stop-motion animation)

**Portrait Gallery**
Focus on the face! Visitors will explore simple, fun approaches to portraiture — from “tracing” a partner’s image while viewing them through glass and drawing a black-and-white self-portrait while looking in a mirror, to using magnets to form a silly portrait.
Collection connection: portraits in various styles/genres
Fun Fact: photo frames on the wall near this station feature reproductions of portraits in Joslyn’s collection

**Pattern Place**
“Thread” colorful, jumbo-sized beads over fixed vertical steel rods to create a wall of pattern. Guests can copy a design from Joslyn’s American Indian beadwork, or come up with an original motif of their own.
Collection connection: American Indian beadwork
Fun Fact: the Pattern Place’s 740 jumbo beads were created from a nontoxic, corn-based resin filament with a 3D printer

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Techno-Canvas
This hi-tech painting studio offers fun with modern, mess-free media. Visitors will wield artist’s tools to “mix, drip, brush, and push paint” as they create a digital masterpiece on the wall — or floor! Guests may email their finished work or post it to Facebook, with the embedded tag “I created this at Joslyn Art Museum! #JAMartworks”.
Collection connection: various paintings/artists will serve as inspiration (example: Jackson Pollock and Helen Frankenthaler for the floor canvas)
Fun Fact: Painters can choose their canvas (unprimed, primed white or black); paint quality (standard, heavy body, or fluid), paint colors, and tools (brushes, palette knife, squeegee, or paint can fitted with a sensor).

Observation Studio
The key to drawing objects is looking! Visitors will saddle up a drawing horse, spend time observing a pre-set still life arrangement, and create a drawing to display or take home.
Collection connection: still life in various styles/genres
Fun Fact: The first arrangement available will highlight Dutch still life (in honor of the Museum’s Rembrandt portrait and two Dutch still lifes)

Vase Space
Visitors will get their hands on faux Greek pots, and use dry-erase crayons to “finish” a vessel with decorative patterns or a story told through pictures. The pots sit on lazy susans for easy access to all sides; large bean bags are available to use as cushions for tipping the replicas on their sides for easy access with the crayons.
Collection connection: ancient Greek pottery
Fun Fact: Vase Space features fiberglass replicas of Greek vases in Joslyn’s collection in four shapes: Amphora (two-handled jar); Hydria (three-handled vessel for carrying water); Kylix (shallow drinking cup raised on a stem from a foot); and Lekythos (narrow-bodied vessel for storing oil, especially olive oil)

Curiosity Corner
Cozy up with a book, play with puppets and artful toys, or construct with a 3D architectural puzzle that mimics Joslyn’s beautiful building. The space includes two reading nooks, a curved upholstered bench, and a small work table.
Collection connections: architecture; various art styles and topics
Fun Fact: The Museum 3D puzzle is made from Maple and mirrors its architectural details, including the inscribed panels on the outside of the building, the grand staircase, entry columns, and glass atrium.

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Creativity Table
This is where visitors make art to take home or to display for all to see. Joslyn provides the materials and plants the seeds of ever-changing ideas at this imagination station!
The first two featured activities:
- Affix various colors of painter’s tape to 10 x 10 inch paper squares to create a design inspired by Joseph Albers’ *Homage to the Square*, on view in the *In Living Color* exhibition
- Create figures from two interlocking paper pieces decorated in the style of Keith Haring, whose work is on view in the exhibition *In Living Color*

Art Works: Rules & Restrictions
All children visiting Art Works must be accompanied by an adult. Strollers are not allowed in Art works (stroller parking is provided just outside the activity space). School groups are not permitted (teachers are asked to encourage parents to bring children on weekends and Thursday evenings).

Adults interested in volunteering in ART WORKS will find details at Joslyn www.joslyn.org/support/volunteer.

Joslyn Art Museum showcases art from ancient times to the present. The Museum was a gift to the people of Omaha from Sarah Joslyn in memory of her husband, George, who made his fortune as president of the Western Newspaper Union. The Museum’s original 1931 building is one of the finest examples of Art Deco architecture in the nation, with 38 types of marble from seven countries. The Walter and Suzanne Scott Pavilion, a 58,000-square-foot addition built in 1994, was designed by renowned British architect Norman Foster as his first U.S. commission. The Museum features galleries, a 1,000-seat concert hall, fountain court, education technology gallery, lecture hall, classrooms, sculpture garden, café, and shop.

General Museum Admission: Free (includes Art Works).
Regular Museum Hours (includes Art Works): Tuesday through Sunday, 10 am–4 pm; late 'til 8 pm on Thursday; closed Monday and major holidays.

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