

cincinnati art museum

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***Images Available Upon Request**

Cincinnati Art Museum to activate grounds, connect to community and Eden Park with Art Climb project

CINCINNATI— The Cincinnati Art Museum’s commitment to engaging with its community will soon be physically represented with a new project, the Art Climb.

With this project, the museum seeks to engage with its surrounding historic, vital neighborhoods, including Walnut Hills. This effort to activate the museum grounds will allow new and broader access through casual and recreational art interactions outside the walls of the museum.

The Art Climb includes a staircase from the sidewalk near the intersection of Eden Park Drive and Gilbert Avenue and leading up to the front museum entrance. This project will open up the museum grounds, connect the museum to its neighbors and provide a space to incorporate outdoor artworks.

Multiple flights of steps and landings will span the hill at the northern corner of the museum’s grounds, around 450 feet from the street to the parking lot.

Art Climb will incorporate a lighting component that will guide visitors up toward the museum. At the top of the staircase, visitors will have an opportunity to access a large pavilion where they can enjoy a view of the city. A Cincinnati Metro bus stop is located near the start of the staircases.

Connecting with the Walnut Hills community was a priority identified when the museum learned about the needs, wants and challenges of those we serve and seek to serve while interviewing and surveying thousands during the development of the museum’s 2016–2021 strategic plan. Since January 2016, the museum held conversations with the Mayor’s Office of the City of Cincinnati, the Cincinnati Park Board and leadership, and Walnut Hills and Mount Adams representatives regarding the plan, and fundraising strategies began to develop in conjunction with the ideas laid out in the strategic plan.

In October 2018, the Cincinnati Art Museum received \$5 million in New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) for this Art Climb. With this support, tax credit assistance, and fundraising commitments, the museum expects the project to serve a minimum of 200,000 visitors annually.

Construction will begin in June, to be completed in late 2019, and dedicated to the public in early 2020. The Cincinnati Art Museum will remain open during the construction.

The museum worked with Emersion Design and Human Nature for architecture and landscape design for this project. Effort has been taken to retain as many trees as possible in the construction of the Art Climb. Invasive honeysuckle and diseased ash trees are being removed. In the last month, Turner Construction was selected as the construction firm.

Like the traditional steps leading to some of the most famous museums around the world, this grand staircase will become a signature gateway from the museum to the nearby community. It will allow better access to street parking along Eden Park Drive, and provide an outdoor space for visitors to engage with art and each other.

“The Cincinnati Art Museum’s strategic plan seeks to answer not only what we must be, given our public charter, but what it hopes to be in context of the best, most forward-looking and transformative arts institutions in the nation,” said Cameron Kitchin, Cincinnati Art Museum’s Louis and Louise Dieterle Nippert Director.

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The Cincinnati Art Museum serves as one of five organizations representing the Walnut Hills community in a city-wide neighborhood development program led by ArtsWave, the funder of the region's arts. It uses the Creative Placemaking process to identify and solve community challenges. The Art Climb project will help bring these creative ideas to life.

The museum has an ongoing relationship with the Walnut Hills community, serving 2,000 people annually with an offering of approximately 30 programs or events per year for the past 13 years. The museum has partnered with Frederick Douglass Elementary, Mercy Montessori School, St. Ursula Academy, Walnut Hills High School Redevelopment Foundation, Lincoln Crawford Nursing Home, Bush Cincinnati Recreation Commission, and the Walnut Hills Branch of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. This spring, the Cincinnati Art Museum is embarking on a new partnership with Purcell Marion High School for curriculum-based project development. In addition to these partnerships, the museum's Associate Director of Community Engagement is active with the Walnut Hills Area Council, attending meetings and reporting on museum activities monthly. The Art Climb project is an opportunity to bring a new level of engagement with the Walnut Hills community.

The Cincinnati Art Museum has accomplished a great deal since activating its strategic plan in 2016. It completed a significant renovation of the Schmidlapp Gallery, which increased natural light and created a welcoming and social space for visitors. It developed and installed fresh gallery interactives, including *MyCAM*, which allows children and adult visitors to create personalized tours. It completed major envelope work and reconfigured our optimized offices and collection storage spaces. Additionally, the museum provided the public with enhanced exhibition offerings including contemporary works never seen in Cincinnati by artists such as Ragnar Kjartansson, Gillian Wearing and William Kentridge, as well as popular and scholarly exhibitions such as *The Terracotta Army: Legacy of the First Emperor of China*, *30 Americans* and *Van Gogh: Into the Undergrowth*.

The museum is seeking to eliminate visitor barriers through renovation projects and internal committees dedicated to accessibility. Construction is underway for an ADA-compliant entry ramp, which will be located near the museum's front entrance. The new ramp, which should be completed this fall, is designed to improve both accessibility to the museum and overall visitor experience, especially for those with strollers and special needs. With the momentum of these projects, the Cincinnati Art Museum will activate the underused surrounding grounds around the museum. These efforts help eliminate barriers and create a welcoming first impression for the museum.

In 2016, Cincinnati Art Museum Board leadership unanimously approved the adoption of a new site master plan that outlines an active engagement of the museum's Eden Park setting and its relationship with the Walnut Hills neighborhood. In addition to the Art Climb, the plan will include walking trails, outdoor art displays that offer opportunities for contemplation, and a new front drive that welcomes visitors with a direct view of the museum's remarkable portico.

About the Cincinnati Art Museum

The Cincinnati Art Museum is supported by the generosity of individuals and businesses that give annually to ArtsWave. The Ohio Arts Council helps fund the Cincinnati Art Museum with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. The Cincinnati Art Museum gratefully acknowledges operating support from the City of Cincinnati, as well as our members.

Free general admission to the Cincinnati Art Museum is made possible by a gift from The Rosenthal Family Foundation. Special exhibition pricing may vary. Parking at the Cincinnati Art Museum is free. The museum is open Tuesday – Sunday, 11 a.m.–5 p.m. and Thursday, 11 a.m.–8 p.m. Visit cincinnatiartmuseum.org for more information.

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