National Portrait Gallery
September Calendar of Events, Programs and Exhibitions

Calendar editors please note:
All events are held at the Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture, located at Eighth and F streets N.W., Washington, D.C. For public information call (202) 633-1000 or visit www.npg.si.edu. The National Portrait Gallery is open every day from 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.

National Portrait Gallery September Docent Walk-in Tours
Docent-led walk-in tours are offered everyday.
Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 11:45 a.m., 1:00, 2:15 and 3:30 p.m.
Wednesdays and Thursdays an additional 5:45 p.m. tour is available.
Saturday and Sunday at 11:45 a.m., 1:30, 3:15 and 4:45 p.m.
On the first and third Saturday of the month, the 3:15 p.m. tour will be offered in Spanish.
National Portrait Gallery docent tours begin in the F Street lobby, no reservations required.

“Lunchtime in the Gallery” Tour
“Eye Contact: Modern American Portrait Drawings”
Wednesday, Sept. 6
Noon

Tour the treasures of the National Portrait Gallery’s 20th-century drawing collection with Wendy Wick Reaves, curator of prints and drawings. A downloadable “Audio Profile” from the exhibition “Eye Contact: Modern American Portrait Drawings” is available on the National Portrait Gallery Web site and can be brought to the gallery on visitors’ MP3 players. Visitors will meet in the Eye Contact special exhibition space on the second floor.

Presidential Family Day sponsored by the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation
Saturday, Sept. 16
Noon to 5 p.m.

Presidential Family Day celebrates the Founding Fathers with art activities, interactive tours, period music and dance. The event takes place in the National Portrait Gallery’s education
Reel Portraits: “Shaft”  
Screening and discussion  
Thursday, Sept. 21  
6:30 p.m.

View the film that put Gordon Parks’ hard-earned street smarts to entertaining use. “Shaft” brought a new type of character to the Hollywood screen and won an Oscar for its theme song by Isaac Hayes. The film was added to the Library of Congress’ National Film Registry in 2000. “Shaft” will be shown in 35mm, followed by a discussion with Ed Guerrero, a New York University film professor and the author of “Framing Blackness: The African American Image in Film,” and Marc Pachter, director of the National Portrait Gallery. Located in the Nan Tucker McEvoy auditorium at the Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture. Admission is free, no reservations required.

Reel Portraits: “Lead Belly”  
Screening and discussion  
Friday, Sept. 22  
7 p.m.

The renowned bluesman Huddie William Ledbetter, known better by his nickname, Lead Belly, was like Gordon Parks, an artistically gifted American gypsy. Building on that shared history, Parks’ dramatization of Lead Belly’s life is a frank, lavish essay on race, legend and the blues. Though Paramount Pictures buried the release of Parks’ film, entitled “Lead Belly,” Roger Ebert called the film “one of the best biographies of a musician I’ve ever seen, and one of the most direct.” “Lead Belly” will be shown in 35mm in the Nan Tucker McEvoy auditorium at the Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture. Admission is free, no reservations required.

Reel Portraits: “The Learning Tree”  
Screening and discussion  
Saturday, Sept. 23  
2 p.m.

“The Learning Tree” was the first major studio feature film directed by an African American. Gordon Parks adapted the screenplay from his autobiographical novel, and composed the score. “The Learning Tree” was among the first 25 films included in the Library of Congress’ National Film Registry in 1989. The film will be followed by a discussion with actor and filmmaker S. Pearl Sharp, who played Parks’ sister in the film. Located in the Nan Tucker McEvoy auditorium at the Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture. Admission is free, no reservations required.
**Curator Talk “Eye Contact” The Challenge of 20th-Century Portraiture**
Sunday, Sept. 24
2 p.m.

Wendy Wick Reaves, curator of prints and drawings, discusses how portraitists of the 20th century adapted to changing styles in art and new notions about identity and the individual. The talk will be followed by a question and answer session in the auditorium. The curator will be available afterwards in the exhibition “Eye Contact: Modern American Portrait Drawings” for further questions or book signing. A downloadable “Audio Profile” from the exhibition “Eye Contact: Modern American Portrait Drawings” is available on the National Portrait Gallery Web site and can be brought to the gallery on visitors’ MP3 players.

**Weekly Portrait Talks**
Each Thursday evening at 6 p.m., a curator or historian from the National Portrait Gallery will conduct “Portrait Talks.” The presenter will choose a portrait to highlight and lead the group from the lobby located near Eighth and F streets to where the image or object is on view.

Thursday, Sept. 7, Brandon Fortune, Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition  
Thursday, Sept. 14, Wendy Wick Reaves, Beauford Delaney by Georgia O’Keeffe  
Thursday, Sept. 21, Frank Goodyear, Red Cloud by Frank Bowman  
Thursday, Sept. 28, Amy Baskette, J. Robert Oppenheimer by Lisette Model

**Current Temporary Exhibitions**

**“Americans Now” – through April 29, 2007**
Drawn from the Portrait Gallery’s permanent collection, “Americans Now” features individuals prominent in sports, entertainment and other fields in the last 25 years. The exhibition reflects the variety of media the Portrait Gallery is now collecting and addresses the museum’s newly established policy of accepting living subjects into the collection. Examples include a hand-stenciled quilt by artist Faith Ringgold, a larger-than-life Polaroid photograph of composer Philip Glass by Chuck Close and the newly unveiled portrait of Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton.

**“Eye Contact: Modern American Portrait Drawing” – through Oct. 9**
This exhibition showcases masterpieces of 20th-century portraiture from the National Portrait Gallery’s drawing collections. The bold, contemporary engagement between one person and another that the term “eye contact” implies is evident in the ambitious watercolors, drawings and pastels assembled in “Eye Contact.” Underscoring the vitality of figurative art in the modern era are examples such as a charcoal drawing by John Singer Sargent, an image of Robert Kennedy by Roy Lichtenstein and a graphite drawing of Ethel Rosenberg by Elizabeth Catlett.

**“Gifts to the Nation” – through April 1, 2007**
This display showcases gifts to the National Portrait Gallery’s collection since the gallery’s exhibit spaces closed in 2000. People portrayed in the exhibition include musician Ray Charles, mezzo soprano Denyce Graves, labor leader David Dubinsky and Nobel Prize-winning microbiologist Selman Waksman.
“One Life: Walt Whitman, a kosmos” – through April 1, 2007
Each year, a gallery within the museum will be devoted to a Portrait Gallery curator’s exploration of one individual’s life. David Ward, Portrait Gallery historian and poet, selected Walt Whitman as the subject for this first exhibition in the series. Whitman’s images and personal memorabilia are coupled with his words to create a visual portrait. The exhibition is on the first floor, the same floor where Whitman worked in the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

This exhibition features the work of 51 artists selected as finalists in the first U.S. national portrait competition. Named for Virginia Outwin Boochever, a former docent whose generous gift has endowed this program, the competition showcases the variety and excellence of contemporary portraiture in painting and sculpture. Winners are highlighted in the exhibition, and visitors have an opportunity to vote for their choice of best portrait.

“Portraiture Now” is the first of a series of changing exhibitions focusing on the work of five contemporary artists—William Beckman, Dawoud Bey, Nina Levy, Jason Salavon and Andres Serrano—who have made portraiture the subject of their recent art, demonstrating the wide range of approaches to portraiture today.

“The Presidency and the Cold War” – through July 8, 2007
During the second half of the 20th century, the United States and the Soviet Union engaged in a global struggle that pitted democracy and capitalism against communism. The Cold War consisted of an arms race, threats and the formation of alliances and military bases around the world that, at times, brought the two superpowers perilously close to all-out nuclear devastation. Beginning with Franklin D. Roosevelt, Joseph Stalin and Winston Churchill at Yalta and ending with the collapse of the Berlin Wall, this exhibition explores how U. S. presidents shaped or reacted to the events of the age.

“Temple of Invention: The History of a National Landmark” – through July 8, 2007
This exhibition honors the completion of the building’s glorious renovation and marks the 170th anniversary of President Andrew Jackson signing the legislation that authorized the building’s construction. Begun in 1836 and completed in 1868, it is one of the oldest public buildings constructed in early Washington, D.C. This landmark was praised by Walt Whitman as the “noblest of Washington buildings” and is considered to be one of the finest examples of Greek Revival architecture in the United States. Charles Robertson, former deputy director at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and specialist in American decorative arts, is the guest curator of the exhibition and wrote the accompanying book. The exhibition is co-organized by the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the National Portrait Gallery.
Permanent Exhibitions

“America’s Presidents”
The nation’s only complete collection of presidential portraits outside the White House, this exhibition lies at the very heart of the Portrait Gallery’s mission to tell the American story through the individuals who have shaped it. The exhibition showcases an enhanced and extended display of multiple images of the 42 presidents of the United States, including the greatest historical painting in the nation’s history, Gilbert Stuart’s “Lansdowne” portrait of George Washington. Also included are the famous “cracked plate” photograph of Abraham Lincoln and whimsical sculptures of Presidents Johnson, Carter and Nixon by noted caricaturist Pat Oliphant. Five presidents will be given expanded attention because of their significant impact on the office: Washington, Andrew Jackson, Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

“American Origins, 1600-1900”
A “conversation about America” is presented in a series of 17 galleries and alcoves chronologically arranged to take the visitor from the days of contact between Native Americans and European explorers through the struggles of independence to the Gilded Age. Major figures from Pocahontas to Chief Joseph, Sam Adams to Henry Clay, and Nathaniel Hawthorne to Harriet Beecher Stowe are among those included. Three of the 17 galleries are devoted exclusively to the Civil War—Washington’s only exhibition space that examines this conflict in depth. Complementing that display is a grouping of modern prints produced from original Mathew Brady carte-de-visites of celebrities of the Civil War era. The exhibition also includes highlights from the Gallery’s extraordinary daguerreotype collection in a room within this space, making the Portrait Gallery the first major museum to establish a permanent exhibition space for the display of daguerreotype portraits of historically significant Americans.

“Jo Davidson: Biographer in Bronze”
Fourteen portraits in bronze and terra-cotta made by renowned American sculptor Jo Davidson between 1908 and 1946 include depictions of Gertrude Stein, Franklin D. Roosevelt, artist John Marin and Lincoln Steffens.

“Twentieth-Century Americans”
Four newly created galleries off the museum’s magnificent third-floor Great Hall showcase the major cultural and political figures of the 20th century. From the reform movement of the first two decades to the movements for social justice and civil rights of the 1960s and 1970s and from World War I to the Persian Gulf War, visitors follow the unceasing struggle to achieve the American ideal.

“Bravo” and “Champions”
Two additional exhibitions feature particular themes in American life. “Bravo!” showcases individuals who have brought the performing arts to life, beginning with P.T. Barnum, who raised the curtain on modern entertainment in the late-19th century and continuing through the present. “Champions” salutes the dynamic American sports figures whose impact extends beyond the athletic realm and makes them a part of the larger story of the nation. A lively combination of portraits, artifacts, memorabilia and videos enhance both exhibitions.
The Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery was established by an Act of Congress in 1962 and opened to the public in 1968. It is the only museum of its kind in the United States to combine the aspects of American history, biography and art.


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