

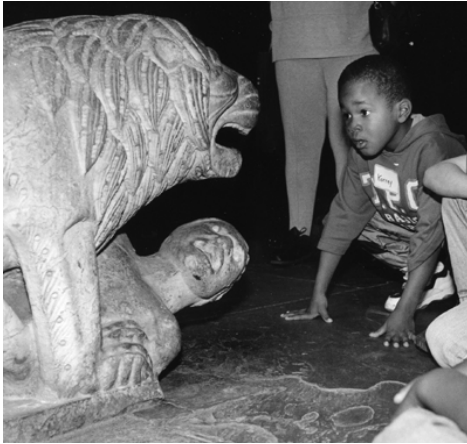
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ISABELLA
SEWART GARDNER
MUSEUM

Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum Hosts *FREE* “Fun for Families!” Events
Featuring Live Music, Art Activities, Storytelling Performances, and More

Free for ALL this year for the first time as a special gift from the Gardner
Wednesdays, February 18 & April 22, 2009 | 11AM–4PM

*Free Wednesday events punctuate a full week of drawing activities and family guides
free for all with admission throughout February and April public school vacation weeks*



“Fun For Families!” (*Free for All*) | Wednesdays, February 18th & April 22nd, 2009 | 11:00 am – 4:00 pm

*Public School Vacation Week Activities (Free for kids under 18; and for adults with museum admission)
Monday, February 16th–Friday, February 20th & Tuesday, April 21st–Friday, April 24th, 2009 | 11:00 am – 4:00 pm daily*

BOSTON, FEBRUARY 13, 2009 • Families looking for an enriching, fun, and affordable(!) way to spend time together this spring can look no further than the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. The century-plus-old, Venetian-inspired fine arts museum is serving up FREE museum admission, along with live music, storytelling performances, art-making activities for kids of all ages, and gallery explorations throughout the museum as part of a series of festive *Fun for Families!* celebrations – on the Wednesday during February and April public school vacation weeks: February 18th and April 22nd – designed to engage families and kids of all ages in art and beauty.

Fun for Families! invites visitors of all ages to enjoy one of the city’s most inspiring destinations together and alongside other families and to exercise their own creativity with a range of activities, gallery guides, and live performances. Activities range from *Wacky Hats* and *Fantastic Creatures* art-making to *Puzzling Portraits* to a *Search and Match* game that asks kids to search the collection to solve puzzles or questions. Looking guides designed especially for kids and families provide a glimpse into animals hiding throughout the collection and more. Live performances, including “A Woodland Cinderella” storytelling and puppet show by Deborah Costine and musical performances by New England Conservatory students add a celebratory air to the events.

Fun for Families! events are **FREE for ALL for the first time this year**, thanks to the support of Bank of America, the Gardner Museum’s *Official Sponsor of School and Community Partnerships Programs*.

The events punctuate a week-long public school vacation week celebration offering enriched activities, drawing around the court, and free gallery guides for kids and families. Public school vacation week activities are FREE for all kids under 18 and free with museum admission for all adult visitors, and are offered during each vacation week: February 16th–20th and April 21st–24th, 2009.

One of the finest art collections in the world, housed in a Venetian-inspired museum palace surrounding an interior courtyard garden, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum is personally installed by Isabella Stewart Gardner to fire the imagination of all who visit. The museum’s *School and Community Partnership Programs* bring diverse groups of

young people, families, and individuals to the museum to experience and engage in art through a series of free days, family evening events, a nationally recognized arts education program with proven success in improving critical thinking skills in young children, and more. These initiatives provide important access and education to many in the community who might otherwise have limited opportunity to experience and engage with art. *School and Community Partnership Programs* specifically serve families and young people nearby Boston neighborhoods including: the Fenway; Hyde Park; Mission Hill; Jamaica Plain; Dorchester; Roxbury; and West Roxbury.

Despite the current economic climate, the Gardner remains committed to ensuring continued, ongoing access to these and other initiatives important to the community. “Cultural institutions have a responsibility to the public to ensure that *everyone* has the opportunity to engage in and experience art,” says **Anne Hawley**, the *Norma Jean Calderwood Director* of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston. “Art and beauty provide solace, respite, and inspiration. It is *precisely* in times of economic uncertainty and challenge that art matters more than ever.”

The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum is a treasure trove for kids and families to explore – from fine art to funny portraits to hidden animals tucked away in corners waiting to be discovered. The Gardner hopes that *Fun for Families!* will encourage parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, nannies, and friends to think of the Gardner as a place to visit and spend time together. Museum admission is always FREE for kids under 18 and admission for adults is \$12 (with discounts or free admission for seniors, students, and museum members) – making the Gardner an affordable and enriching destination for families any day of the year. “Many don’t think of the Gardner Museum as a place to bring kids,” adds Hawley. “But, Isabella Gardner’s unique museum, intimate galleries, and magical courtyard are chock-full of art objects and ideas just waiting to be found. The Gardner is a wonderful place to explore and discover together – and we hope to see you here again and again!”

“TEENS BEHIND THE SCENES” PROGRAM • *Fun for Families!* activities are developed in conjunction with participants in the museum’s new *Teens Behind the Scenes* program. Designed to engage teens in arts education and program planning, *Teens Behind the Scenes* was started in 2007 and is directed by Johnetta Tinker, the museum’s *Director of Community Programs* and herself an artist based in Dorchester. This year’s *Teens Behind the Scenes* come from Boston public high schools in the neighborhoods of Dorchester, Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, and Roslindale. The *Teens* spend two hours a day on two days each month at the museum, working with museum educators to brainstorm ideas, talk about the collection, exhibitions, and related themes, and meet with visiting artists and museum staff members to help create creative activities for the public. This year’s *Teens* drew inspiration from the museum’s collection, from Isabella Gardner, and from themes relating to the upcoming exhibition, *Journeys East: Isabella Stewart Gardner and Asia*. Providing new insights into Isabella Gardner’s personality and showcasing travel scrapbooks, archival photographs, and Asian art objects compiled and collected during her 1883/84 travels throughout Asia, *Journeys East* will be on view February 21 through May 31, 2009.

A full schedule of Fun for Families! activities is available online at: www.gardnermuseum.org by clicking “Calendar.”

ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM • A Unique Environment for Learning • 280 The Fenway Boston MA 02115 617.566.1401 www.gardnermuseum.org • Tue.-Sun., 11 am-5 pm • \$12 adults; \$10 seniors; \$5 students; \$2 off with same day Museums of Fine Arts admission; FREE children under 18 and all named “Isabella” • Built in the style of a 15th-century Venetian palazzo, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum is a magical place, unlike any other museum in the world. With three floors of galleries displaying over 30 centuries of art surrounding a lush indoor courtyard garden, this unique space fires the imagination and offers a one-of-a-kind experience and opportunity for learning and engagement in all the arts have to offer. In 2007, the Gardner Museum completed an important three-year, Department Of Education (DOE)-funded study into the effects of arts education on the development of critical thinking skills in young children. The study found that elementary school students from Boston public schools who visited the Gardner repeatedly to learn to look at and talk about art showed significant improvements in critical thinking skills crucial for learning. Gains in skills including close observation, interpretation, and problem solving demonstrate that visiting museums is a valuable learning experience for school-age children, and complements the education they receive in school. More information about this study and the importance of arts in education is online at: <http://www.gardnermuseum.org/education/tta/tta.html>.

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MEDIA CONTACTS | Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum: Katherine Armstrong Public Relations Director 617.278.5107 karmstrong@isgm.org

EDITOR’S NOTES | A complete schedule of *Fun for Families!* activities follows here – and is available online at: www.gardnermuseum.org by clicking “Calendar.” | A complete list of Gardner Museum *School and Community Partnerships Programs* is available by request. Media reporters, photographers, and film crews are welcome to attend and cover *Fun for Families!* or other *School and Community Partnership Programs* events at the Gardner. Participants in the museum’s *Teens Behind the Scenes* program, as well as community-based performers and the museum’s own Johnetta Tinker, are available to interview at or leading up to *Fun for Families!* and/or other museum events. Please contact the press office to coordinate logistics. | Information about the museum’s comprehensive study on arts education and critical thinking, “Thinking Through Art,” is online at: www.gardnermuseum.org/information/press.asp.

ISABELLA
SEWART GARDNER
MUSEUM

“FUN FOR FAMILIES!”

WEDNESDAYS | FEBRUARY 18TH & APRIL 22ND | 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM | *Free for All*

For Kids & Families

11:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Art-Making Activities

“GETTING IN TOUCH WITH ART” | *Information Desk, 1st floor*

Look and touch various art objects that are similar to what’s on display in the museum. See the damaging effects time and touch have on works of art.

“FOIL MAGNET SURPRISE” | *West Cloister, 1st floor*

Draw designs and patterns you will find on furniture and other art objects. Then emboss your drawings in foil and..... Surprise!

“HANDY DANDY HATS” | *Spanish Cloister, 1st floor*

Design and construct a crazy COOL hat to wear throughout the day.

“FANTASTIC CREATURES” | *East Cloister, 1st floor*

Create fantastic creatures out of pipe cleaners, wire, colorful buttons and other recycled materials. Attach them to your clothes to make your very own fashion statement.

“PUZZLING PORTRAITS” | *Dutch Room, 2nd floor*

You have to find the portrait to solve the puzzle. Look carefully at all of the shapes, designs and details in the portrait and then try to solve the puzzle. Some puzzles are a little WACKY!

Gallery Exploration Activity

“SEARCH & MATCH GAME” | *Gothic Room, 3rd floor*

Search the floor for tiles with different designs and patterns. Match them with your game clues to discover which tiles belong and which are decoys. You have to be a very good detective!

11:30 AM & 2:00 PM

Storytelling Performance

“A WOODLAND CINDERELLA” BY DEBORAH COSTINE | *Tapestry Room, 2nd floor*

Join award winning storyteller and puppeteer Deborah Costine for two exciting puppet shows of *A Woodland Cinderella* in the enchanting Tapestry Room. *All ages*

12:30 PM & 2:45 PM

Art-Making Activity

“CREATE A SNOW GLOBE” ACTIVITY | *Meet at the Information Desk, 1st Floor*

Make your very own Snow Globe to take home. *Pick up a free ticket for this activity at the Information Desk. Designed for kids 8 years and older (up to 2 children per adult).*

For Adults

12:30 PM

Gallery Talk

“INTRODUCTION TO THE GARDNER” | *Tapestry Room, 2nd Floor*

Learn about Isabella Stewart Gardner and the museum she created

3:00 PM and 3:45 PM

Musical Performance

NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY STUDENTS | *Tapestry Room, 2nd Floor*

Relax in the Tapestry Room and enjoy free musical performances by students from the New England Conservatory of Music – including early music from the Guitar Duo and peaceful tunes for harp, viola and flute in the Harp Trio. *Kathrin Ten-Hagen, Violin; Patricia Au, Piano*

On Your Own

11:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Questions?

“ASK ME” VOLUNTEERS

Have questions about Isabella Gardner and the museum she created?

Ask the volunteers stationed in the galleries wearing blue aprons and “Ask Me” buttons.

11:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Gallery Guides

“FAMILIES @ THE GARDNER” & “INSIDE ISABELLA’S COURTYARD”

Enjoy these self-guided looking and sketching activity books alongside the indoor garden. *Pick up this self-guide at the Information Desk, on the 1st floor.*

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