

A photograph of a woman in a white blazer and orange top looking up at a museum exhibit through a window. She is holding a smartphone. Other visitors are visible in the background, including a woman taking a photo and a man holding a small dog. The scene is lit with warm, golden light, suggesting an evening or indoor museum lighting. The window has a decorative metal railing in the foreground.

Renewing the Promise: For the Public Forever

2019–2024 STRATEGIC PLAN FINAL REPORT

ISABELLA
SEWART GARDNER
MUSEUM

—
Escape the Ordinary

“... a Museum for
the education and
enjoyment of the
public forever ...”

Isabella Stewart Gardner



OVERVIEW

Isabella Stewart Gardner believed in the transformative power of art, assembling an unparalleled collection and building a Museum of such beauty and distinction that more than 100 years later it continues to leave an indelible impression on every visitor. In developing the 2019–2024 *Renewing the Promise* Strategic Plan, we looked to Isabella for inspiration—at a time when women didn’t have the right to vote, she established her Museum with a civic purpose, “for the education and enjoyment of the public forever.” The Strategic Plan is a realization of her vision and a reactivation of the boundary-breaking, creative radicality that she embodied.

Isabella channeled her passion for the arts into this Museum, establishing a place of joy, learning, and connection for her fellow Bostonians. Today we honor her legacy through a commitment to welcoming our communities and exploring what it means to be a good partner, neighbor, and ally. In our plan, we took an art-first approach, illuminating the questions artists pose in their work, elevating their engagement with the pressing concerns of their eras and ours, and bringing diverse audiences together to create a space of meaningful encounters and aesthetic inspiration.

The sharing of authority and the valuing of our communities’ knowledge and perspectives has, perhaps, represented the greatest change in our creative enterprise under the plan. This broadening of curatorial practice catalyzed the participation



and partnership of local artists, performers, civic leaders, educators, and interdisciplinary scholars. It allowed the Museum to engage urgent issues in our society alongside, and inextricably linked with, the beauty and emotion of the artwork on display. As we scan the landscape of our polarized world, we recognize that inclusive excellence requires connection and exchange rather than simplistic binary thinking. The complexity and open-ended potential of art to yield multiple meanings offers a path to fostering constructive dialogue and shared experience. With this understanding, the Gardner is poised to further innovate beyond the boundaries of traditional museum practice in creating opportunities for communities to see their narratives reflected in and intertwined with the Museum's own. The strategic, creative risk-taking that has characterized the Gardner's activities these past five years—and that originate in the founder's own biography—must continue. The Museum's greatest contribution to civic leadership is, in fact, its contribution to artistic thought leadership, as Isabella knew so well.

When we launched the plan in September 2019, the world was a very different place. Six months later, a global pandemic forced our closure. Shortly after COVID-19 shuttered the world, George Floyd's murder triggered a national reckoning with racialized violence. At the same time, increased political divisions and growing inequalities across our country made places of respite, connection, and thoughtful exchange both rare and essential. That the plan carried us through such challenging times and remains more relevant than ever is a testament to its



inclusive conception, design, and implementation. Its ongoing progress can be credited in large part to our staff, Board, and creative partners working together to center the needs of our communities and extend a warm welcome to every visitor.

Our audiences voted with their feet. In aspiring to engage a broader public, we set a goal to attract and maintain an annual visitorship of 350,000; the last two years of the plan set new attendance records of 425,821 (2023) and 446,699 (2024) visitors per year, with

18–44-year-olds leading our age demographics at 56% of visitors, higher than the general population within a 10-mile radius of the Museum. The racial diversity of our visitor base has made progress toward matching that of the general population in our area, continuing our efforts to draw more effectively from Black, Asian, and Hispanic/Latino households.

In addition, supporters both new and existing enthusiastically stepped up to help us meet our ambitions to serve the public. The fundraising campaign for *Renewing the Promise*, intended to sustain the Gardner's expanded exhibitions, programs, and community engagement—now and long into the future—exceeded goals in every category, with almost half of endowment gifts pledged by new donors.

As I look back on the last five years, I am so proud of the Gardner's work to unite civic and cultural equity, and to actualize the promise of an art museum truly dedicated to the public. I am immensely grateful to the staff, trustees, volunteers, members, and supporters whose commitment and efforts made the Museum's progress possible. Most of all, I thank the many community partners, artists, visionaries, and visitors who turned a building and its historic collection into a vibrant and evolving arena for our collective dreams.

Peggy Fogelman
Norma Jean Calderwood Director



CORE VALUES

The 2019–2024 Strategic Plan was organized around the following framework of the Gardner’s core values.

A room with red damask wallpaper. A large painting of Prometheus Bound by Peter Paul Rubens is mounted on the wall. The painting shows Prometheus being tortured by an eagle. Two cherubs are flying above him. The room features ornate furniture, including a table and a chair. A text overlay is present on the left side of the image.

**THE COLLECTION
IS OUR CATALYST**

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In seeking to engage the issues of our time, advance scholarship, and welcome diverse communities, we asked new questions of our rich historic collection. More than 2,000 years of global art became the generative starting point for exhibitions, programming, and the questions of today. Rather than focus exclusively on contemporary art as other museums have, we sought to connect past and present. Whether it was a painting by Titian or one of Isabella's own travel albums, we began with the objects that make this Museum unique and, increasingly, explored works once considered marginal to our collection. Isabella's book of *Afro-American Folk Songs* (1914), for example, inspired a collaboration with our partner ensemble Castle of Our Skins and resulted in a new film series on the history of Black spirituals. Our curators developed new tools to mine the collection's infinite potential, share it with a diverse range of partners, and facilitate the

transformational encounters that informed new works of art, music, and public dialogue.

Researching and sharing the collection is foundational for its capacity to inspire contemporary artists, scholars, educators, and community partners. To this end, we vastly improved the cataloging and photography of our holdings. We made tremendous strides in creating a digital, photographic, and web-based, searchable record for each of the over 20,000 objects in our collection. Soon to encompass every artwork in our care, it provides worldwide access for everyone from visitors to researchers, stimulating new scholarship and providing the basis for both enhanced Museum experiences and innovative artistic responses.

Fueled by digitization, we featured more nuanced stories about our collection and history through a dedicated blog: *Inside the Collection*. Since its inception in 2020, 79 authors have written 197 posts. The blog

The cohesiveness of the collection has a lot to do with her sensibility. How do we curate? It really is storytelling. And it's storytelling about the mind and the heart. And I think that one of the reasons that it is so beautiful to walk through the gardens or to walk through the various floors containing these pieces is the eye shifts from one moment to the next which means that consciousness shifts from one moment to the next.

— Hilton Als,
Gardner Visiting Curator of Performing Arts and *The New Yorker* staff writer





When you first walk into this place, you're sort of overwhelmed by all the things you see. This lady liked to collect. This lady collected people, musicians, artists, family. She collected things. She collected paintings. She collected fine art, plants, all sorts of things. . . . There were certain things I gravitated to. They were mostly the pieces that seemed to relate to my assemblages.

— Betye Saar, artist and collaborator
on Gardner exhibition *Betye Saar:
Heart of a Wanderer*

became an essential tool to disseminate research and amplify the voices of a wide range of scholarly and community partners, from Cambridge University classicist Mary Beard to photographer and Gardner Artist-in-Residence Hakeem Adewumi. A new initiative to elevate the profile of our Chinese and Japanese collections by engaging consulting curators to analyze these objects added another source of blog contributors and a greater understanding of the Museum's non-Western holdings.

Digitizing the collection enabled us to expand its definition, incorporating the vast holdings of archival documents and initiating online cataloging of our “living collection” of plant species, some of which descend from Isabella's time. Digitization also helped broaden accessibility both online and onsite through screen readers, mobile-friendly resources, and, to date,

10 galleries restored
in five years

15 galleries relit
in five years

87% of works of
art on view
published online

3,080 visual descriptions of collection objects for individuals who are blind or have low vision.

Enhancing the onsite experience of our collection required significant capital investments to improve the direct encounter of art championed by Isabella herself. Responding to one of our most frequent visitor comments—low gallery lighting—we retrofitted 15 permanent collection spaces with new lighting systems, made possible by recent LED technology that is safer for light-sensitive objects and more energy efficient, creating a significantly enhanced visitor experience.

Further improving the visitor experience, we undertook 10 permanent collection gallery refurbishments—including a complete restoration of the Titian Room—to return them to our founder's original intentions. Based on in-depth research, our conservators cleaned artworks, resurfaced or replaced floors, commissioned new textiles to replicate those originally installed by Isabella, and returned objects to their historic locations, including several Chinese paintings and a 17th-century Indo-Portuguese textile produced in Bengal. The results significantly enhanced encounters with the collection, for instance, making the James McNeill Whistler pastels and Black Glass Madonna sculpture in the Veronese Room accessible for the first time in at least three decades. The process of bringing visitors closer to the aesthetic that Isabella had envisioned also produced new knowledge and shed fresh light on her curatorial practice, resulting, for example, in more accurate cataloging data made available online.





CREATIVITY IS
OUR LEGACY

CREATIVITY IS OUR LEGACY

Creativity has always been central to the Gardner's mission. In fact, Isabella established the first artist residency by inviting John Singer Sargent to use the Gothic Room as his studio. Building on our founder's bold legacy of supporting artists and celebrating creative talent in all its forms, we amplified our commitment to producing original content and connecting across disciplines. At every stage—from ideation to creation to display—we challenged ourselves to embrace the possibilities of collaboration internally and externally. These partnerships stimulated outputs of contemporary relevance to our communities—from LGBTQIA+ rights to explorations of identity to family dynamics to the history of sexual violence—and, at the

same time, advanced scholarship across various fields of knowledge. Every project undertaken within the plan demonstrated that the union of social relevance and scholarly rigor within the study of art, past and present, is not only possible but compelling and necessary.

Delivering on our promise to become a center of creativity, the Strategic Plan catalyzed partnerships with creators across a range of disciplines championed by Isabella herself, including the visual arts, music, dance, spoken word, landscape, and horticulture. In five years, we increased the number of artists who worked with us, engaging 1,117 individual creators. They included 29 Artists-in-Residence (AIRs), 15 Polly Thayer Starr artists, 17 Neighborhood Salon Luminaries, composers, musicians, dancers, and many others.

Artistic outputs for and in response to our collections and exhibitions increased significantly. Between 2019 and 2024, we commissioned 13 Façade projects and displayed 67 newly created works by Artists-in-Residence. As we deepened relationships with our AIRs, the number of artists who created new work for the Museum within three years of their residency increased by 90%, making visible the direct connection between the AIR program and the public's experience. One of the most notable shifts occurred in our performing arts, making positive inroads toward broader representation, especially in the traditionally exclusive field of classical music. Of 28 new commissions of music and dance, 27 were

108

new works presented by the
Museum in five years

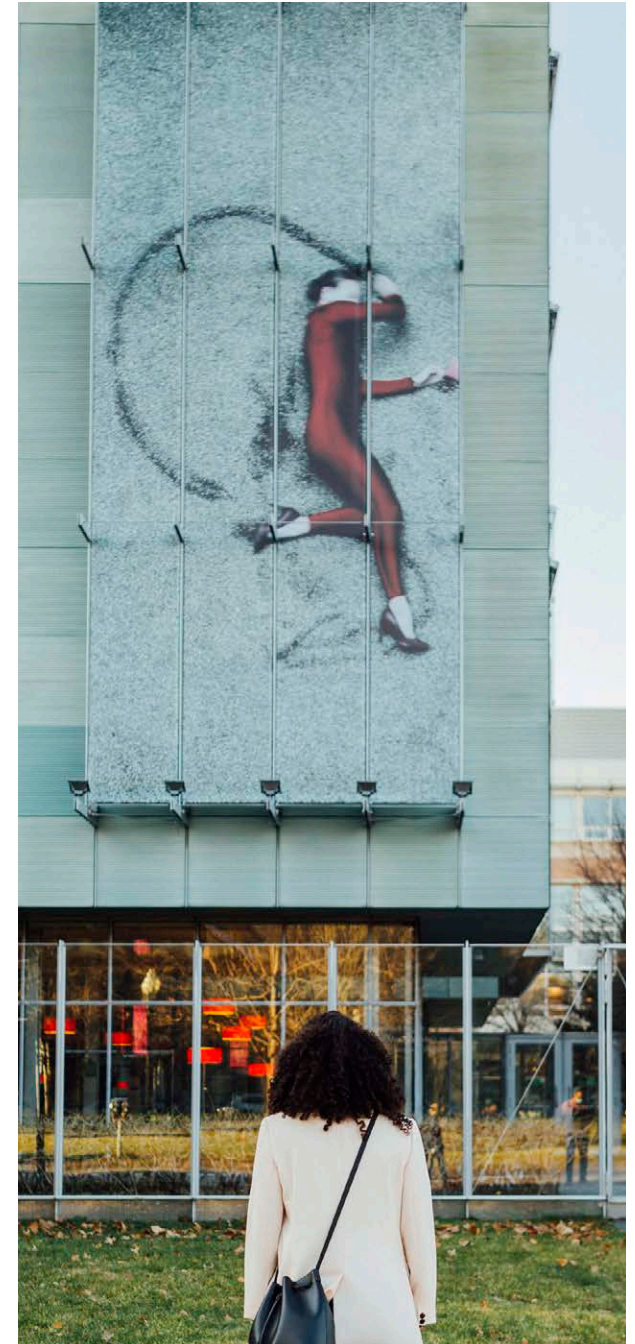
13

 Façade commissions

67

 Museum supported works
by Artists-in-Residence

28

 music and dance
commissions



I felt genuinely heard, respected, and celebrated by the Museum team, who approached my vision with sincerity and dedication. As a Black, Haitian, and female artist, this experience was profoundly meaningful. It is my hope that more artists have the chance to work with institutions that foster such deep collaboration and care as I have experienced with the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

— Fabiola Jean-Louis,
Gardner Artist-in-Residence

by creators of diverse backgrounds. Our curators broadened the spectrum of talent in the repertoire and the performers hired to play it. For example, 46% of composers whose work was performed at the Museum in the last five years were people of color or female.

At the same time, we increased the cadence of exhibitions. Before 2019, the Museum averaged about three new projects per year. This grew to nine projects annually, with each exhibition season and related programs exploring thematic connections between the historic art in our collection, contemporary artistic practice, and the issues in our society today. Exhibition-related events reinforced

key messages in the galleries and beyond. Underscoring Isabella's commitment to music as a place-making activity, examples include *Meeting Thomas McKeller*, an afternoon of dance, music, and spoken word that celebrated John Singer Sargent's model featured in the exhibition *Boston's Apollo* [Gardner 2020 winter exhibition]; and performances of works by Charles Ives and Caroline Shaw inspired by landscapes explored in the exhibition *Big Plans: Picturing Social Reform* [Gardner 2019 summer exhibition].

Collaboration not only unlocked creative potential but changed the way we work. Inspired by Isabella's generous spirit, our curators reached out to share authority with our community. In five years, they partnered with 61 creators to advise, co-conceive, co-curate, and co-produce exhibitions, programs, and scholarship, and disseminate new knowledge in gallery didactics, online content, and publications. These collaborations incorporated the perspectives and expertise of the communities we seek to serve, fostered new ideas, and stimulated our own curatorial talent in new and expansive directions. Additionally, over the last five years, the Museum produced 14 books and exhibition catalogs, several of which won national awards and received international critical acclaim.

15,882

visitors made their own art in
Open Studio programs

Presence of Plants [Gardner 2023 summer exhibition] brilliantly exhibited how the natural world moderates an artistic practice that is research-driven, process-oriented, and often in dialogue with other disciplines and traditions. . . . In the spirit of the Gardner Museum itself, the exhibit and its associated events link the experiential methods of the artist, explorer, and historian—past and present—through nature and culture.

— Rosetta S. Elkin,
Professor of Architecture, Landscape,
and Urban Design, Pratt Institute

The increase in exhibition activity necessitated changing our planning approach, with multiyear lead times to enable community involvement and original research, as well as partnerships with other art institutions to travel select shows to multiple venues. Nonetheless, we remained responsive to timely opportunities. In 2024, we worked with co-curator Dr. M. Lee Pelton, President of The Boston Foundation and a leading voice for racial equity, to bring artist Steve McQueen's *Lynching Tree* to Boston during the 50th anniversary of the city's busing crisis.





COMMUNITY IS
OUR PURPOSE

COMMUNITY IS OUR PURPOSE

From the outset of the Strategic Plan, we prioritized the audience of Greater Boston, understanding that our founder sought to provide the city she called home with access to art and inspiration. We focused our energies and resources on creating a cultural home for 21st-century Bostonians, providing high-quality visitor experiences and greater opportunities to encounter art without economic barriers. We invested in discounted and free access, tripling our free admission to 90 hours annually and welcoming nearly 19,000 visitors, providing free entry for students and faculty through our university membership program, extending the library pass program to more underserved communities via 35 additional Boston Public Library branches, maintaining free entry for

21,900

Boston Public Schools students

AND

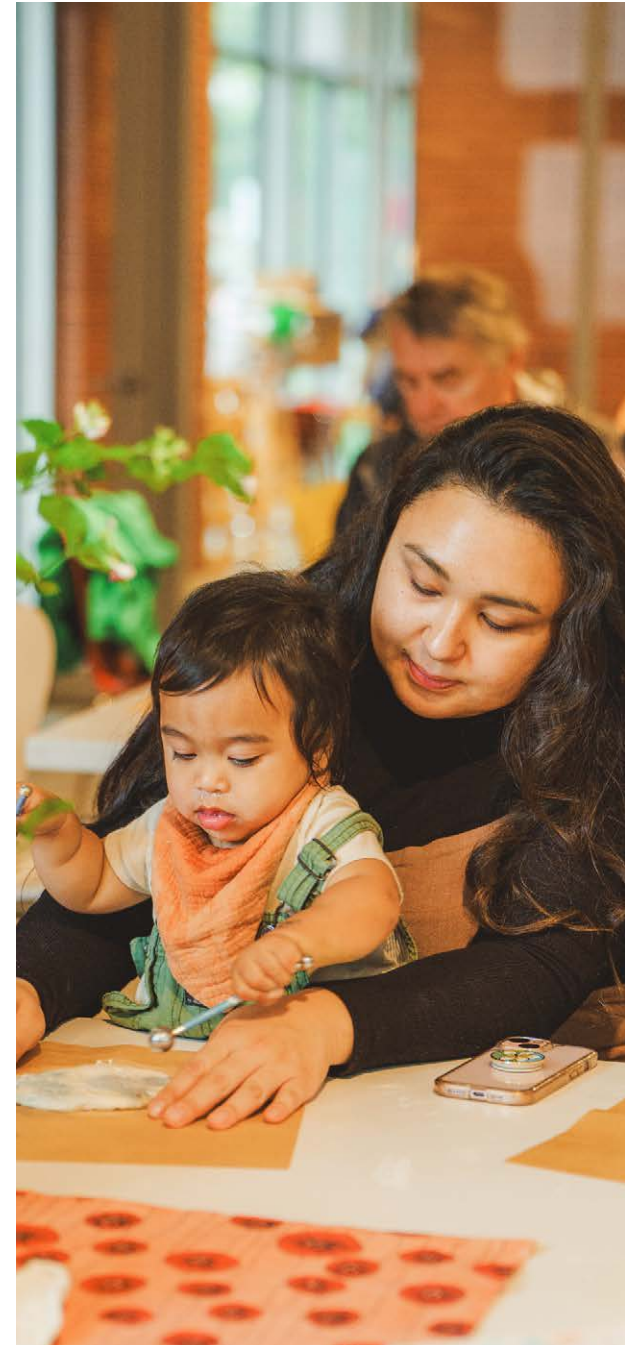
411

Boston Public Schools teachers
participated in
Thinking Through Art in five years

youth 17 and under, and signing on to Boston Family Days, Phase 2 of Mayor Wu's initiative to provide free access to K-12 students and family members on the first two Sundays of every month.

Deepening our partnerships with Boston Public Schools (BPS) enabled the Museum to reach new communities and younger audiences, establishing a foundation for lifelong cultural engagement. Our signature Thinking Through Art (TTA) program—Boston's only intensive arts-based professional development program for K-12 teachers—reached more than 21,900 students in five years, with our annual numbers more than doubling between 2018/19 (3,400 students per year) and 2024 (8,200 students per year). With onsite workshops, we taught crucial skills to more than 411 teachers—the majority new to the Gardner—giving them tools to improve their students' critical thinking and to integrate arts learning across subject areas and grade levels. Teachers brought these approaches back to their classrooms, benefiting generations of students and expanding the program's impact beyond the walls of the Museum.

Extending our commitment to Boston's students beyond high school graduation, we created a paid college internship program, Gardner Ambassadors, to focus specifically on diverse student populations that traditionally had little access to museum careers. First developed in partnership with Bunker Hill Community College, and later expanded to include UMass Boston, this mentorship program combines on-the-job training and skill development with gallery





learning and visitor interaction. In turn, it enriches our own staff culture. Since the program's inception, the Museum has hired 19 former Ambassadors.

It has often been said that relationships build at the speed of trust, and that is particularly true in forging community partnerships. It is a process of years and decades, not days and months. One-off, project-based collaborations, which have characterized art museum outreach over the past four decades, pose substantial challenges to developing sustained, non-transactional, trustworthy relationships with community members and organizations. In order to explore new approaches under the Strategic Plan, the Gardner initiated multiple strategies to deepen collaboration with and among individuals and organizations. With the goal of establishing a model for ongoing, shared learning and mutual exchange between two organizations, the Museum partnered with The Theater Offensive (TTO) as our first-ever Community Organization-in-Residence.

The Theater Offensive, a local organization dedicated to serving and uplifting queer and trans people of color through performing arts, worked with the Gardner for 18 months, yielding multiple benefits for both institutions as well as the public. Some benefits of the partnership were unanticipated—such as co-working days at the Gardner that enhanced the ability of team members to form close collegial relationships. Others were planned around a series of exhibitions focused on queer representation, visibility, and joy. The outputs ranged from public panel discussions to in-gallery didactic content to the Gardner's first-ever drag show, all garnering strong participation and appreciation

Your partnership with The Theater Offensive has brilliantly highlighted the intersection of art and activism, creating a space where culture and liberation intertwine seamlessly. This collaboration is a commendable example of how art institutions can play a crucial role in societal change.

— Thaddeus Miles,
Senior Director of Diversity Initiatives,
MassHousing and founder,
The BlackJoy initiative

from Boston's LGBTQIA+ communities. Most importantly, the initiative offered a new strategy for meaningful partnership that has continued beyond the scope and content of the original residency.

Community partnerships are not formulaic: in responding to varied needs, collaboration necessarily takes different forms. Distinct approaches characterize other developing partnerships. With Pao Arts Center in Chinatown, the Gardner is forging its first-ever exhibition at two Boston sites, with the Museum's curator organizing both shows and select artists appearing at both locations. The collaboration with Pao has deepened the Museum's understanding of and connectivity to Chinatown and local Chinese

American creatives, while offering these artists new platforms and new audiences at the Gardner. Other community approaches spearheaded in the past five years include special exhibition viewings for community organizations, outside of public hours, to enable dialogue and networking for these groups' members, and previews of future projects with community leaders to explore possible collaborations. While we are still learning how best to build and deepen the Museum's relevance to Boston's many communities, centering this goal as an essential purpose of our work has transformed our understanding of the Gardner's capacity for civic leadership.

When we not only look deeply at a piece of artwork and think about it but listen to what other people are thinking about and noticing, it really opens our minds and makes us see things we didn't see and think about things we didn't think about. Thinking Through Art is making critical thinking accessible to all learners.

— Jennifer Kobialka,
Elementary School Teacher,
Boston Public Schools





DIVERSITY, EQUITY,
ACCESSIBILITY,
AND INCLUSION
ARE OUR
COMMITMENTS

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND INCLUSION ARE OUR COMMITMENTS

From its inception, we decided to take an integrated approach to Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI), prioritizing shared responsibility across Museum departments over centralization within a particular position or office. As a result, DEAI permeates the Museum at every staff and governance level. While we established institutional goals to evolve a purpose-

I often feel like I'm overlooked in this city of Boston. As a young, Black woman, it brings me joy to experience exhibits such as these—*Boston's Apollo*. As a people, we are SO TALENTED, and we have so many stories to tell. Thank you for reiterating to me how important it is to tell mine.

— Anonymous,
Boston's Apollo response wall

driven organizational culture that encourages diverse thought and inclusivity, we relied on each department to develop specific tactics aligned with the nature of their work and the unique functions of their roles. To name just a few examples, the staff's varied accomplishments include: increased engagement of Black-owned and Fairtrade vendors; expanded technical analysis and conservation of non-Western objects; the development of 75 ethnobotanical snapshots of plants in our collection to illustrate the intersections of their cultural histories and colonialist practices; a climate action plan to reduce fossil fuel consumption and contribute to environmental justice; a more diverse cohort of Museum Teachers and Volunteers; a new studio program for students and adults who are visually impaired and/or who are deaf or hard of hearing; touch tours for visitors who are blind or have low vision; revamped job descriptions and placement ads to attract diverse job candidates; and required inclusivity training for all staff, led by in-house trainers.

These projects were in addition to the many community partnerships, exhibition collaborations, artistic commissions, public programs, and concerted outreach described in the other sections of this report. Activities were informed and guided at both staff and Board levels through a DEAI staff working group and





Board Task Force. To represent the communities we serve and incorporate a greater range of leadership experience, 38% of our Board of Trustees identify as non-white and 58% as female. Our current staff is 26.6% Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), an ongoing area for advancement. In addition, to ensure transparency and accountability, DEAI progress reports summarizing goals and execution throughout the Museum are posted twice yearly on our website. While no single process can change a century-old organization overnight, this kind of organic integration into our day-to-day work has been transformative, making our DEAI commitment sustainable, less subject to staff turnover, more nimble in response to evolving needs, and geared toward fostering a culture of individual agency. As is often stated, achieving cultural equity is a journey, and one we will continue to pursue long after the completion of this Strategic Plan.

38% of Trustees identify
as non-white

58% of Trustees identify
as female

How can a house museum created by a wealthy white woman in 1903 have any resonance with a community of mostly Black and Brown people in the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston? ... The Gardner is a groundbreaking institution even as it has a stable and unchanging collection. They use their programming, their education systems, their wall text, their stellar visiting artist and music programs to engage and support diverse and underserved visions and voices. They make their collection come alive for scholars and for the community in which the Museum sits. It does the work of museology with rigor and clarity without pandering—seeking to inform and include rather than to simply present.

— Steven Locke,
Professor of Fine Arts, Pratt Institute,
and Gardner Artist-in-Residence



CONCLUSION



CONCLUSION



Any five-year plan, by necessity, must remain flexible to respond to unforeseen challenges and opportunities, as was the case with *Renewing the Promise*, and particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, it was imperative to evolve our strategies and tactics when better approaches to achieving goals presented themselves. Perhaps the greatest success of *Renewing the Promise* has been its holistic integration into the daily work of every member of the staff and Board. Both staff and leadership used the core values of this Strategic Plan to guide decision-making and to actively inform institutional priorities—making it a living document that both established and reflected our greatest aspirations.

As we look to the future, our core values not only endure, but offer ways of deepening the Gardner’s

relevance as a source of creativity, inspiration, learning, and belonging. Several of the innovations launched within *Renewing the Promise* point the way to future endeavors. The Organization-in-Residence model initiated with The Theater Offensive holds potential for other in-depth partnerships that foster co-creation, resource sharing, and the bridging of different audiences. Our work with community colleges has enabled the Gardner to develop a pipeline of diverse, emerging professionals in varied disciplines—from accounting to education—who otherwise would have little exposure to or opportunity for museum careers. Building further on these programs through paid internships and other forms of collaboration will benefit not only the museum field, but the city’s ability to retain local talent and nurture equitable employment in the cultural sector. We have seen the benefits of free access in reducing financial barriers and extending the sense of welcome for our communities. Further augmenting our ability to offset the cost of admission (currently the Museum significantly subsidizes even paid admission) will make art experiences even more widely available and help meet the needs of our public for connection, solace, and beauty. And, like Isabella, we will continue to offer an abundant welcome to every visitor who journeys alongside us.

The Museum’s greatest strength is its strategic alignment between the Board of Trustees, the Director, and staff. All three stakeholders align on the Museum’s mission, strategic plan, and strategic goals thanks to an inclusive, strategic planning process in 2019. The Gardner’s Strategic Plan, *Renewing the Promise*, is now the work of the Museum. It informs every aspect of the Gardner at all levels . . . the Gardner is now a united, community-driven art museum that honors its past as it redefines its future.

— American Alliance of Museums
Accreditation Site Visit Report,
September 7, 2022

EXHIBITIONS



SUMMER 2019

Big Plans: Picturing Social Reform
(Hostetter Gallery)

June 20, 2019 - September 15, 2019

Joan Jonas: I Know Why They Left
(Fenway Gallery)

January 23, 2019 - October 20, 2019

Laura Owens: Untitled
(The Anne H. Fitzpatrick Façade) – CONTINUED
FROM SUMMER

June 25, 2019 - January 14, 2020



FALL 2019

In the Company of Artists: 25 Years of AIR
(Hostetter Gallery)

October 17, 2019 - January 20, 2020

Joan Jonas: I Know Why They Left
(Fenway Gallery) – CONTINUED FROM SUMMER

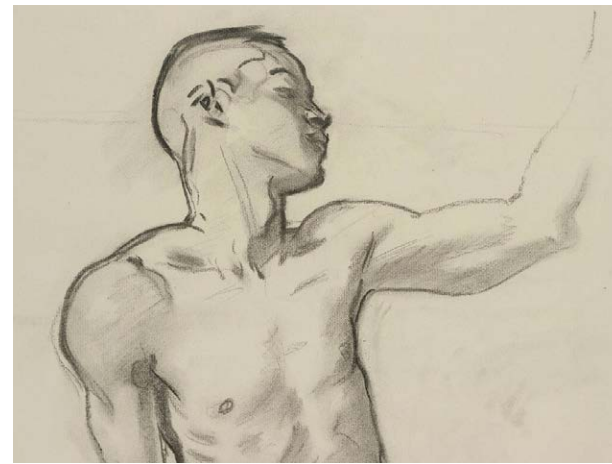
January 23, 2019 - October 20, 2019

Close Up: Raphael and the Pope's Librarian
(Fenway Gallery)

October 31, 2019 - January 30, 2020

Lee Mingwei: Sonic Blossom
(The Courtyard)

October 16, 2019 - December 1, 2019



WINTER/SPRING/FALL 2020

(COVID extended runs)

*Boston's Apollo: Thomas McKeller and
John Singer Sargent*
(Hostetter Gallery)

February 13, 2020 - October 12, 2020

Adam Pendleton: Elements of Me
(Fenway Gallery)

February 13, 2020 - November 15, 2020

Lorraine O'Grady: The Strange Taxi, Stretched
(The Anne H. Fitzpatrick Façade)

January 14, 2020 - November 24, 2020



WINTER/SPRING 2021 (COVID extended runs)

Shen Wei: Painting in Motion
(Hostetter Gallery)

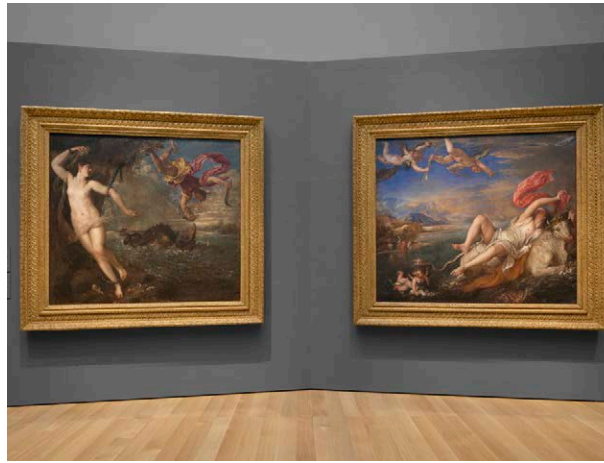
December 3, 2020 - June 20, 2021

Shen Wei: The Moving Image
(Fenway Gallery)

December 3, 2020 - June 28, 2021

Shen Wei: Red Marker Number 1
(The Anne H. Fitzpatrick Façade)

November 24, 2020 - June 28, 2021



SUMMER/FALL 2021 (COVID extended runs)

Titian: Women, Myth and Power
(Hostetter Gallery)

August 12, 2021 - January 2, 2022

Mary Reed Kelly and Patrick Kelly: The Rape of Europa
(Fenway Gallery)

August 12, 2021 - January 2, 2022

Barbara Kruger: Body Language
(The Anne H. Fitzpatrick Façade)

June 29, 2021 - February 1, 2022



WINTER 2022

Being Muboli: Portraits as Resistance
(Hostetter Gallery)

February 10, 2022 - May 8, 2022

Being Muboli: Portraits as Resistance
(Fenway Gallery)

February 10, 2022 - May 8, 2022

Muboli: Qbamukile, Mauritius
(The Anne H. Fitzpatrick Façade)

February 1, 2022 - June 1, 2022

605,075 visitors attended an exhibition in
the Hostetter Gallery in five years

EXHIBITIONS



SUMMER 2022

Drawing the Curtain: Maurice Sendak's Designs for Opera and Ballet
(Hostetter Gallery)

June 16, 2022 - September 11, 2022

Close Up: Bourdichon's Painted Prayers
(Fenway Gallery)

June 16, 2022 - September 11, 2022

Universes: Oliver Jeffers
(The Anne H. Fitzpatrick Façade)

June 3, 2022 - October 4, 2022



FALL 2022

Metal of Honor: Gold from Simone Martini to Contemporary Art
(Hostetter Gallery)

October 13, 2022 - January 16, 2023

Titus Kapbar: The Jerome Project
(Fenway Gallery)

October 13, 2022 - January 16, 2023

Stacy Lynn Waddell: Home House
(The Anne H. Fitzpatrick Façade)

October 5, 2022 - February 7, 2023



WINTER 2023

Betye Saar: Heart of a Wanderer
(Hostetter Gallery)

February 16, 2023 - May 21, 2023

Fellow Wanderer: Isabella's Travel Albums
(Fenway Gallery)

February 16, 2023 - May 21, 2023

Adam Pendleton: Untitled (Giant not to scale), 2019-2020
(The Anne H. Fitzpatrick Façade)

February 7, 2023 - June 13, 2023

40%

of visitors to the Museum over the past five years
attended an exhibition in the Hostetter Gallery



SUMMER 2023

Presence of Plants in Contemporary Art
(Hostetter Gallery)

June 22, 2023 - September 17, 2023

Presence of Plants in Contemporary Art
(Fenway Gallery)

June 22, 2023 - September 17, 2023

Natalie Jeremijenko: Declaration of Interdependence
(The Anne H. Fitzpatrick Façade)

June 13, 2023 - October 3, 2023



FALL 2023

Inventing Isabella
(Hostetter Gallery)

October 19, 2023 - January 15, 2024

Fabiola Jean-Louis: Rewriting History
(Fenway Gallery)

October 19, 2023 - January 15, 2024

Carla Fernández: Tradition Is Not Static
(The Anne H. Fitzpatrick Façade)

October 3, 2023 - February 6, 2024

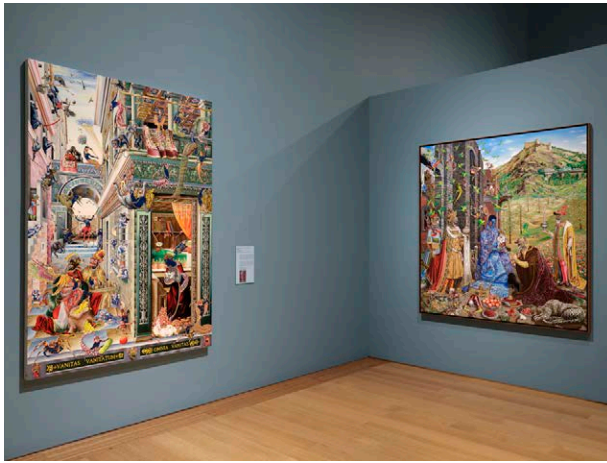


WINTER SPECIAL 2024

Steve McQueen, Lynching Tree
(Fenway Gallery)

January 20, 2024 - February 4, 2024

EXHIBITIONS



WINTER 2024

Raqib Shaw: Ballads of East and West
(Hostetter Gallery)

February 15, 2024 - May 12, 2024

Raqib Shaw: Ballads of East and West
(Fenway Gallery)

February 15, 2024 - May 12, 2024

Raqib Shaw: The Perseverant Prophet
(The Anne H. Fitzpatrick Façade)

February 6, 2024 - June 4, 2024



SUMMER 2024

On Christopher Street: Transgender Portraits
by Mark Seliger

(Hostetter Gallery)

June 13, 2024 - September 8, 2024

Portraits From Boston, With Love
(Fenway Gallery)

June 13, 2024 - September 8, 2024

Hakeem Adewumi:
Possession of A Recalcitrant Dream, 2024
(The Anne H. Fitzpatrick Façade)

June 4, 2024 - October 1, 2024



FALL 2024

Manet: A Model Family
(Hostetter Gallery)

October 10, 2024 - January 20, 2025

Mary Ellen Mark: A Seattle Family, 1983-2014
(Fenway Gallery)

October 10, 2024 - January 20, 2025

Mickalene Thomas: Sandra, She's a Beauty, 2009
(The Anne H. Fitzpatrick Façade)

October 1, 2024 - February 18, 2025

97%

of press mentions in 2024 connect
exhibitions to contemporary issues

PHOTO CREDITS

COVER: Photo by Steve Osemwenkhae. Visitors in the Raphael Room

PAGE 2: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA. Photograph by Billie Weiss. Visitors in the Gothic Room, John Singer Sargent, *Portrait of Isabella Stewart Gardner*

PAGE 3: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA. Photo by Matt Teuten. Jean-Appolon Expressions (JAE) performing in Calderwood Hall

PAGE 5: Photo by Steve Osemwenkhae. Visitors in the Courtyard

PAGE 6: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA. Photo: Sean Dungan

PAGE 7: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA. Photo by Matt Teuten. Visitor in the Spanish Cloister

PAGE 8: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA. Diana Greenwald and Siddhartha Shah reviewing Isabella Stewart Gardner's travel albums in the Gardner Conservation Lab

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PAGE 10: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA. Photography by Matt Teuten. Lorraine O'Grady and Adam Pendleton in conversation in Calderwood Hall

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PAGE 12: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA. Fabiola Jean-Louis working in her studio

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PAGE 14: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA. Photo by Ally Schmaling. Visitors on the lawn on Juneteenth Free Admission Day

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PAGE 21: *Lynching Tree*, 2013 © Steve McQueen, Courtesy of the Kramlich Art Foundation. Photo: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston. Steve McQueen, *Lynching Tree*

PAGE 22: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA. *On Christopher Street: Transgender Portraits* by Mark Seliger in Hostetter Gallery

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PAGE 24-28: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA. Exhibition images

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PAGE 31: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA. Photo by Troy Wade. The Courtyard: Late Summer Jewels



APPENDIX

Attendance

Metric	Sept 2018-Aug 2019	CY24
Total Attendance	336,011	446,699

Visitor Demographics

Metric	CY19	CY24
Local (10-mile radius, roughly within route 128)	197,934	234,674
Aged 18-44	186,382	232,199
Aged 18-34	143,923	182,295
BIPOC	131,435	156,312

Ladder of Engagement

Metric	Sept 2018-Aug 2019	CY24
Members	6,500	8,700
Patron Program Members	175	218
Libraries in Pass Program	200	235
Universities in Member Program	17	17

Broaden and Diversify Audience

Metric	Sept 2018-Aug 2019	CY24
# free hours	36	90
# attendees during free hours	11,324	18,630
Thinking Through Art (# teachers & # students)	88 teachers 3,400 students	109 teachers 8,200 students

Exhibitions

Metric	Sept 2018-Aug 2019	CY24
All visitors to exhibitions in 5 years	40.4%	605,075

Exhibition Relevance

Metric	Sept 2018-Aug 2019	CY24
Press mentions connecting exhibitions to contemporary issues	82%	97%

Participating Artists and Performers

Metric	Art	Music	Education	5 yr Total
BIPOC	14	339	301	654
Female	16	283	235	534
Total Artists	29	639	449	1,117

Access to the Collection

Metric	Sept 2018-Aug 2019	CY24
Works on view catalogued	60% 4,738	87% 6,904
Works on view photographed	25% 2,007	72% 5,730
Collection Blog total views	0	120,112 [73,355 users]
# of visual descriptions of objects for visually impaired visitors	0	3,080

Organizational Culture

Metric	Sept 2018-Aug 2019	CY24
Employee growth in performance-based promotion	11.8%	18%
Retention in frontline staff	68.7%	77.3%

Diverse Headcount

Metric	Sept 2018-Aug 2019	CY24
All-Staff	no data	26.6%
Supervisor/Technical	9.67	9.09%
Gardner Ambassadors	n/a	75%
% diversity of Trustees (BIPOC/gender)	27% BIPOC 54% female	38% BIPOC 58% female

Renewing the Promise Campaign

Category	Funds Raised
Unrestricted	\$25,150,000
Restricted	\$15,850,000
Endowment	\$36,125,000
TOTAL	\$77,125,000

Online Review Scores

Metric	Sept 2018-Aug 2019	CY24
Google	4.65	4.67
Trip Advisor	4.5	4.26
Yelp	4.5	4.35

Website

Metric	Sept 2018-Aug 2019	CY24
Total users	883,295	1,691,783
Average # pages/session	3.5	3.1

Social Media Engagement Rates

Metric	Sept 2018-Aug 2019	CY24
Total social media followers	66,643	257,696
Instagram	4.3%	6.2%
LinkedIn	6.8%	7.1%

ABOUT THE REPORT

The Strategic Plan metrics focus on the period from September 1, 2019 to December 31, 2024. Select metrics were specified in the Museum’s Executive Summary upon the public release of the Strategic Plan in 2019. The Museum tracked additional metrics listed below. Other goals included in the full version of the Plan were not tied to specific metrics.

SOURCES OF DATA

Tessitura

Tessitura records offer insight into attendance and visitation patterns, membership data, fundraising, and more.

TruTrade

TruTrade is a location, intelligence, and member demographics analysis software. Individual data is not used, cannot be uniquely identified, and information is not collected from minors.

Other Data Sources

Data is also gathered from Google Analytics (website data), inbound marketing reports (email performance data), Sprout Social (organic social media data), Cision (earned media monitoring), and other tracking tools.



