

Art in Chicago

December 9-13, 2026



Image credit: Edward Kemeys. *Lions*, 1893. The Art Institute of Chicago, gift of Mrs. Henry Field. © The Art Institute of Chicago. Courtesy of the Art Institute of Chicago.

PROGRAM

DATE	ACTIVITY	DETAIL
Wednesday Dec 9	Program begins	PM: Program orientation followed by welcome dinner
Thursday, Dec 10	Chicago Architecture Center / AIC / Second City	AM: Chicago Architecture Center PM: Art Institute permanent collection Enjoy improv @ world famous Second City
Friday, Dec 11	Art Institute of Chicago	AM: <i>Mary Cassatt: After Impressionism</i> , guided tour PM: <i>Beatriz Gonzalez: In Series and Full Color</i>
Saturday, Dec 12	Museum of Contemporary Art / live music	AM: <i>Rashid Johnson: A Poem for Deep Thinkers</i> PM: jazz club dinner
Sunday, Dec 13	Program ends	AM: Breakfast at the hotel PM: Homeward bound

ITINERARY

Wednesday, December 9

Arrive in Chicago and settle in at the Chicago Athletic Association hotel before meeting with fellow travelers for a welcome dinner and introduction to Ellie York, tour director.

Thursday, December 10: Chicago Architecture Center, Art Institute of Chicago



Photo credit: James Steinkamp, courtesy CAC.

In the morning, we'll walk a short block to the [Chicago Architecture Center](#) to learn about the history of the city of Chicago and its iconic architecture. We'll tour two exhibitions that examine the Illinois prairie landscape on which Chicago sits, and how urban design

coexists with wildlife and natural ecosystems within the city. On our way to lunch, we'll go through Millennium Park to visit Anish Kapoor's Cloud Gate (The Bean) and Jaume Plensa's Crown Fountain and talk about public art in Chicago.

After lunch, we'll head to the Art Institute of Chicago to freely roam the galleries. Highlights of the collection include the Impressionist gallery, the newly arranged American wing, the Chagall windows, and the Thorne Miniature rooms. In the evening, we'll catch a comedy show and dinner at Chicago's iconic [Second City](#) improv theater.

Friday, December 11: Art Institute of Chicago



Image credit: Mary Cassatt. *The Child's Bath*, 1893. The Art Institute of Chicago, Robert A. Waller Fund. Photo by Robert Lifson, The Art Institute of Chicago.

In the morning, we'll walk across the street to the Art Institute for the main event. [Mary Cassatt: After Impressionism](#) is a major retrospective of the iconic Impressionist painter Mary Cassatt's heretofore lesser-known and deeply ambitious modernist works. The exhibition, which spans late 1880s through the early 1900s and includes more than 75 artworks, shifts focus beyond the artist's contributions as an Impressionist to give due attention to her bold innovations, showcasing Cassatt's modernist aesthetics, breakthroughs, and lasting impact. We'll be joined by a guide from the Art Institute to be confirmed.

In the afternoon, we'll visit [Beatriz González: In Series and Full Color](#). The exhibition is the first retrospective dedicated to the drawings and prints of González, whose practice spanned more than six decades until her death earlier this year. González (1932–2026) was a celebrated Colombian artist known for

her use of popular media to interpret and reflect cultural and political events, as well as her role in advancing representation for female artists in the 20th century. Luciana Rizo, School of the Art Institute of Chicago graduate student in art history originally from Colombia, will offer a presentation and

answer questions on Gonzalez's work and her important place in Colombian art history and contemporary culture. You may also tour the museum's permanent collection freely.

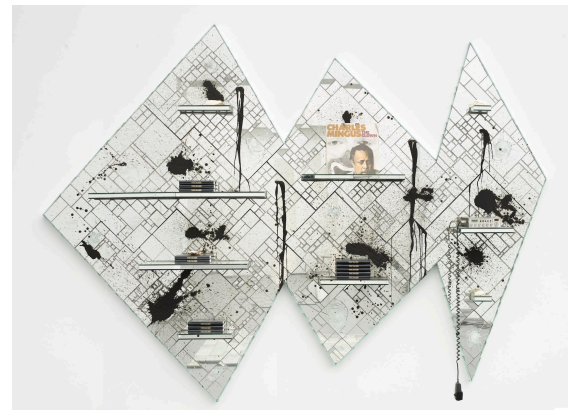
Dinner together at a local restaurant.

Saturday, December 12: Museum of Contemporary Art

Weather dependent, we'll walk or taxi across the river to the Museum of Contemporary Art with opportunities to take in iconic Chicago riverfront architecture. We'll see [Rashid Johnson: A Poem for Deep Thinkers](#), the first major retrospective by internationally recognized contemporary American artist Rashid Johnson. Born in Chicago, Johnson's work uses distinct materials and deeply personal visual vocabularies to examine and unpack cultural histories and contemporary cultural and racial conditions in America.

We'll have leisure time on your own to explore downtown, warm up at a coffee shop, shop, or visit one of Chicago's many more museums or cultural centers. We'll meet back up to take public transit to [Andy's Jazz Club](#) for

dinner, live music, and maybe some dancing to celebrate the last full day of the trip.



Rashid Johnson, "Glass Jaw," 2011. Mirrored tile, black soap, wax, books, shea butter, vinyl album cover, CB radio, oyster shells, and paint; 88 1/2 × 118 1/2 × 12 inches. Collection Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Gift of Mary and Earle Ludgin by exchange, 2012.2. © 2011 Rashid Johnson/Photo Nathan Keay.

Sunday, December 13: Departure

For those who are not extending their visits to the Lower 48, you will have a transfer to the airport and catch your return flight home. Box breakfasts can be provided for travelers who have early morning flights, and accommodations can be made for late departures.



Image credit: Georges-Pierre Seurat. *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*—1884, 1884–86, painted border 1888/89. The Art Institute of Chicago, Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Plan to arrive on Wednesday, Dec 9 or the morning of Thursday, Dec 10. Depart Sunday, December 13. Alaska Airlines operates a direct Seattle-Chicago route.

HOTEL

Chicago Athletic Association, 4-night stay. [The Chicago Athletic Association](#) is a landmark hotel located on Michigan Avenue in downtown Chicago, directly across from Millennium Park and the Art Institute. The iconic property first opened in 1893 amid the boom surrounding the World's Columbian Exposition, and after the closure of the Athletic Association in 2007, the historically significant building underwent an interior restoration to be reopened as a boutique hotel. Check-in: 3 PM, check-out: 12 PM

TRANSPORTATION

Most planned activities will be walkable within the Chicago Loop. We will use public transportation for any outings that are not accessible by walking, and transport cards will be purchased ahead of time. Airport transfers will be pre-arranged. Uber and Lyft rides are also available.

TOUR DIRECTOR



Photo credit: Amanda Goldsmith

[Ellen \(Ellie\) York](#) is a graduate student in the Arts Administration and Policy Program at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and is a Pritzker Fellow. Originally from Fairbanks, Alaska, she received her BA in Art History from the University of Washington. She has held gallery and collections management positions at the Alaska House Art Gallery in Fairbanks and in the Bay Area of California at Creative Growth Art Center, McEvoy Foundation for the Arts, and Preservation Arts. She is currently a private collections manager.