



Galleries of the American Midwest

From Chicago to Detroit

18–29 June 2025 (ML 721)

11 nights • £7,230

Lecturer: Gijs van Hensbergen

A journey to some of the greatest art galleries in the US, through Illinois, Missouri, Indiana, Ohio and Michigan.

Private access to the Taft Museum and the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati.

The architecture of Finnish émigré Eliel Saarinen, and his son Eero, is a subtheme throughout, culminating in the campus at Cranbrook.

Led by art historian, Gijs van Hensbergen, an expert on American collections and collectors.

The Midwest may be a byword for cultural annihilation but it's a lazy stereotype. American states such as Illinois and Michigan are powerhouses of manufacturing, mining and agriculture, yet they also harbour a civic pride and commitment to self-improvement that have resulted in world-class art collections, exhibited in buildings and settings that are often astonishing in their own right. And between the major urban centres are lesser-known, often delightfully surprising pockets of cultural distinction in Missouri, Ohio and Indiana.

The Chicago Art Institute is one of the finest art museums in the world (in the US, second only to the Met in New York), notable for its Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterpieces, as well as works by Abstract Expressionists such as Rothko and de Kooning. We enjoy two visits, part-guided and part-independent, while also exploring the stupendous architectural environment that surrounds it in 'The Loop' (our hotel is right there). Ground-breaking buildings are a consistent theme of the tour, as we take in Eero Saarinen's Gateway Arch, which soars over the Mississippi in St Louis, and enjoy private visits to another Saarinen commission, the Miller House in Columbus, and to Frank Lloyd Wright's Smith House on beautiful Cranbrook campus outside Detroit.

'Motor City' was running on empty – it filed for municipal bankruptcy in 2013 – but is undergoing a regeneration that we witness on a locally guided walk through the Art Deco skyscrapers of the downtown area. Detroit's Institute of Arts has always been a beacon of excellence and remains one of America's finest galleries featuring, among many exceptional



Georges Seurat. *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte* – 1884, 1884/86. Helen Birch Bartlett Memorial Collection. The Art Institute of Chicago.

works, a Van Gogh self-portrait and Diego Rivera's vast Detroit Industry mural. The latter is contextualised by a visit to the Ford automobile plant, birthplace of the Model T. But it's the more unsung treasures of the Midwestern hinterlands that really add a patina to the tour – the Glass Pavilion in Toledo, showcasing more than 5,000 works of art in glass; the mediaeval collection in the incredible Cleveland Museum of Art; the exquisite Allen Memorial Art Museum outside Cleveland (one of the finest university collections in the US); the Max Beckmanns and Gerhard Richters in St Louis; and the Japanese Edo period paintings in Indianapolis.

After twelve nights and five states the notion that the Midwest is an empty canvas is dispelled by the artistic richness of this particular slice of America.

Itinerary

Flights from London are not included. The tour begins with a welcome drink at the Kimpton Grey Hotel in Chicago on the evening of 18 June. The tour leaders fly from London on a British Airways flight departing Heathrow at c. 11.00am on this day should you wish to join them. There is an airport transfer to meet this flight. See 'Practicalities'.

Day 1: Chicago. Your room at the Kimpton Grey Hotel in Chicago is available from 4.00pm on 18th June. Join the tour leaders for a welcome drink before dinner. First of two nights in Chicago.

Day 2: Chicago. The day is largely dedicated to the Art Institute, one of the world's greatest galleries, and within the US matched only by the Met. The superb and encyclopaedic collection is best known for its Impressionist and Post-Impressionist masterpieces, as well as a wonderful display of American paintings. Renzo Piano's Modern Wing houses the Institute's remarkable collection of 20th-and-21st-century art. Guided tours of selected galleries are interspersed with independent time. The adjacent Millennium Park has noteworthy installations by Anish Kapoor and Jaume Plensa. Overnight Chicago.

Day 3: Chicago, St Louis. An architectural walk through 'The Loop' to see skyscrapers and monuments of the Chicago School as well as some of the public art more recently installed. Some independent time before driving to the airport for the late-afternoon flight to St Louis. First of two nights in St Louis.

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Day 4: St Louis. Walk through the Citygarden (works by Fernand Léger, Richard Serra, Aristide Maillol) to the landmark Gateway Arch. Designed by Finnish-American architect Eero Saarinen, and inaugurated in 1965, it soars over the Mississippi and the city. The Pulitzer Arts Foundation is in a sleek Tadao Ando building and is renowned for its high-calibre exhibitions. There are just three permanent works, two of which were commissioned specifically for this space: Serra's *Joe* and Ellsworth Kelly's *Blue Black*. Continue to the St Louis Art Museum, built in the heart of Forest Park for the 1904 World's Fair. The collection is wonderfully rich and varied, with modern European art at its core. It is also home to the world's largest collection of Max Beckmann paintings. Overnight St Louis.

Day 5: Indianapolis. Morning drive to Indianapolis (255 miles). Newfields (Museum of Art) has one of the oldest collections in the US and is in a beautiful setting on a leafy campus north of the city. We explore the highlights: Gauguin and the Pont-Aven school, Japanese Edo-period paintings, and contemporary art including an installation by James Turrell. Free time to see the gardens and sculpture park. Overnight Indianapolis.

Day 6: Columbus, Cincinnati. Drive to Columbus for a private visit of the Miller House. Commissioned in 1953 by industrialist, philanthropist and architectural patron, J. Irwin Miller, this is a perfect example of a complete modernist house. Architecture by Eero Saarinen, interior design by Alexander Girard and landscape design by Dan Kiley all remain remarkably intact. Continue to Cincinnati for a visit of the Contemporary Arts Center, a stunning new build by Zaha Hadid which opened in 2016. Our hotel is next door. Overnight Cincinnati.

Day 7: Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland. Begin with private visit to the Taft Museum, with a small but excellent collection of European old masters and 19th-century American art. Founded in 1881, the Cincinnati Art Museum is long-established with a wide-ranging collection. Impressionists feature strongly and there are notable Fauvist and Cubist works, as well as an entire wing devoted to local artists and decorative arts. En route to Cleveland (240 miles), stop at the Columbus Museum of Art, which has a fine collection of modern European and American painting, including early Cubist works by Picasso and Juan Gris. First of two nights in Cleveland.

Day 8: Cleveland. On the shores of Lake Erie, Cleveland's manufacturing centre is being revitalised in the 21st century. The city's art museum is testament to this with a programme of massive expansion, including a magnificent light-filled atrium by Rafael Viñoly. There are many treasures here, particularly in European and American painting from the 19th and 20th centuries, and in the world-class holding of Asian art. The mediaeval and Renaissance galleries in the original museum building are beautifully displayed. Free time here or to walk to the Museum of Contemporary Art, a reflective, geometric form in the heart of the university circle. Overnight Cleveland.

Day 9: Oberlin, Toledo, Detroit. A short drive out of Cleveland to the Allen Memorial Art Museum, housed on the edge of the charming Oberlin college campus. This small but eclectic collection contains important holdings of 16th and 17th century Dutch and Flemish paintings. Continue to Toledo. The city's glass-manufacturing heritage is reflected in the elegant, Japanese-designed Glass Pavilion, home to a superb collection of over 5,000 works of art in glass. The main museum includes European painting from the Renaissance to Impressionism, with notable works by Rubens, Rembrandt, David and El Greco. There is a strong American Art and Modern collection and a fascinating display of Japanese Netsuke. Continue to Detroit. First of three nights here.

Day 10: Detroit. A morning walk looking at the Art Deco monuments of Downtown. Continue to the Detroit Art Institute, one of the finest collections in the US. Diego Rivera's *Detroit Industry* fresco and an expansive collection of American art are among the highlights here but there are many gems: a Van Gogh self-portrait, Bruegel's *The Wedding Dance* and a fine collection of German Expressionist works. Overnight Detroit.

Day 11: Cranbrook. The day is dedicated to the enchanting campus of Cranbrook, one of the leading graduate art schools in the US. Here Eliel Saarinen taught and his son Eero studied. Visits include Saarinen's Art Deco house, the Art Museum, and special access to works from some of the 20th century's leading artists and designers, all of whom had connections to Cranbrook. End with a private tour of the Smith House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright in Usonian style for two teachers in Detroit. Third and final night in Detroit.

Day 12: Detroit. Visit the Ford Piquette Avenue

Plant, Henry Ford's factory and the birthplace of the Model T. Drive to the airport arriving in time for the suggested flight to Chicago, departing c. 5.15pm, and connect to the overnight flight to London departing c. 7.10pm.

Lecturer

Gijs van Hensbergen. Art historian and author specialising in Spain and the USA. His books include *The Sagrada Familia* (2017), *Gaudí, In the Kitchens of Castile and Guernica* and he has published in the *Burlington Magazine* and *Wall Street Journal*. He read languages at Utrecht University and Art History at the Courtauld, and undertook postgraduate studies in American art of the 1960s. He has worked in England, the USA and Spain as exhibitions organiser, TV researcher and critic and is a Fellow of the Cañada Blanch Centre for Contemporary Spanish Studies at the LSE.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £7,230. **Single occupancy:** £8,530. *International flights are not included.*

Included: domestic flight with United Airlines from Chicago to St Louis on day 3; private coach throughout; hotel accommodation as described below; all breakfasts, 1 packed lunch and 7 dinners with wine, water and coffee; all admission charges; all tips; all taxes (federal, state, city and airport); the services of the lecturer, tour manager and local guides where used.

Visas: British citizens can enter the USA without a visa by applying for a visa waiver online. We will advise on this. *If you have travelled to Iran, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Yemen, Libya or Somalia since March 2011 you are not eligible for the waiver and will need to apply for a visa.*

Accommodation. The Grey Hotel Kimpton, Chicago (www.grayhotelchicago.com): a luxury boutique hotel conveniently located in 'The Loop' within walking distance of the Chicago Institute of Art. **The Ritz-Carlton, St Louis** (ritzcarlton.com/en/hotels/stlrz-the-ritz-carlton-st-louis/overview): elegant 5-star in classical style with three restaurants, a martini bar, cigar club, and gym. All rooms have a balcony. **Le Meridien, Indianapolis** (lemeridienindianapolis.com): 4-star boutique hotel in the heart of downtown that has undergone complete renovation.

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21c Museum Hotel, Cincinnati

(21cmuseumhotels.com/cincinnati): 4-star hotel, nextdoor to the Contemporary Arts Center designed by Zaha Hadid; facilities include a restaurant and a rooftop bar with views of downtown.

Hyatt Regency Cleveland (cleveland.regency.hyatt.com):

located in a landmark building constructed in 1890, with convenient access to downtown Cleveland.

Westin Book Cadillac, Detroit

(bookcadillacwestin.com): Landmark 4-star hotel built in 1924 in downtown; three restaurants, bar and indoor pool. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use throughout.*

How strenuous? This is a long tour with frequent hotel changes, a lot of coach travel and standing around in museums. Fitness and stamina are essential. Average distance by coach per day: 89 miles.

Group size: between 12 and 22 participants.