



## **‘It writes our history in the present’: Carnegie Museum of Art director previews 59th Carnegie International**

The show features the work of 50-plus artists, with everything from Japanese flower arrangement to planetariums



SHAYLAH BROWN ✓  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette  
sbrown@post-gazette.com ✕

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The 59th Carnegie International is poised to be one of the most expansive to date, featuring three curators — Ryan Inouye, Danielle A. Jackson and Liz Park — and the work of more than 50 artists from all over the world.

Bringing together an international exhibition and building upon a legacy dating back to 1896 has been an extremely thoughtful and intentional process, says Carnegie Museum of Art director Eric Crosby.

The last Carnegie International — held from Sept. 24, 2022 to April 2, 2023 — focused on world history and the history of conflict. This year’s

[International](#) considers partnership. The exhibition, which runs from May 2, 2026, to Jan. 3, 2027, is expected to surpass the more than 200,000 visitors seen last time.

With the bulk of the exhibition taking place over the summer — and overlapping with the Carnegie Museum of Art's summer camp — this year's iteration aims to invite the curiosity and playful nature of younger generations. Crosby sat down with the Post-Gazette to give a preview of the show. *(This interview has been edited for length.)*

### **How do you see the 2026 Carnegie International continuing to shape Pittsburgh's cultural Identity?**

Every International opens to a completely changed world. The exhibition happens every four years now. In four years time, so much can transpire. We have all felt that in various ways. This museum is between two universities, where freshmen come and become seniors, and every one of them gets an international experience one way or another.

This exhibition reflects the museum's desire to facilitate closer connections and relationships between artists, the public and partners. This exhibition will focus on commissioning artists and establishing longer term relationships with artists and the museum. The International will also explore new partnerships with organizations around the city, asking the question of what art invites us to do and think about right now. At a time when conversations may feel strained and relationships broken are invites to repair, those are the conversations that are most meaningful to us.

### **What types of conversations do you hope arise from the International?**

There are four presenting partners — the Kamin Science Center, the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, the Mattress Factory and the YMCA in the Hill District. With each of those organizations, they provide their own cultural context and set of conversations that are very much underway. Each of them are invited into a co-commissioning relationship with an artist.

The way we think about our relationships with artists, they have the potential to transform the whole of the museum, transform our understanding of what is possible with and between art, the artists and the public. We hope to advance the conversations that are already underway

with those organizations and how artists bring their own lived experiences to help catalyze change and create a new context.

**How do you anticipate the presenting partners bringing in new audiences that may not have otherwise experienced the museum?**

We will see. I'm sure that will happen. I can imagine the overlap between the Mattress Factory's audience and the Carnegie Museum of Art's audience is probably pretty big. You never know, though. They could use the Mattress Factory as another kind of art resource than they use this one. I think it is very much an experiment in convening publics. I am particularly excited about the overlap between the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh and the Carnegie Museum of Art's work with younger people, and that is an exciting opportunity.

**How will this International highlight the younger generations and excite them about art?**

Just the fact that we have the Children's Museum that is nationally renowned is remarkable. I have a deep respect for that organization and its work with artists. In fact, we have learned a lot from the way they commissioned and worked closely with artists. They also have a history of working with artists from around the world. They bring those artists in and help with the creation of new work for the younger public who might interact with art differently. It provides an entirely new experience for artists who might not think of their art reaching a younger audience. I have a deep respect for the creative context that they have built. I think it makes perfect sense that we would work together.

**How were the different partners chosen, specifically the Thelma Lovette YMCA?**

That YMCA came to us as a site for a theatrical production by the artist Brooke O'Harra and that piece will premiere over the opening weekend of the Carnegie International. The YMCA is a very appropriate location for the theatrical piece. The Historic Hill District is very important to this museum. The museum stewards the "Teenie" Harris Archive, which documented life in the Hill District for decades. For the last Carnegie International, we commissioned the artist James "Yaya" Hough to produce a mural that was designed collectively with residents of the Hill District and

Nafasi Art Gallery. It's a historic relationship between the museum and that part of the city.

**How do the artists that will be part of the International complement some of the exhibitions that have already existed within the museum?**

I think about the International, which happens every four years, as an opportunity for the museum to reinvent itself. The museum moves in a four-year cycle and the International is a high point in the cycle that allows us to think differently about what the museum can and should be. I see it as defining a context that the museum can move forward from. We have a lot to learn from the International. I wouldn't say that we know what we will learn now, just yet. It is a context-setting project. It writes our history in the present.

**How do you define the success of the International?**

We have standard metrics of visitation. Last year, we had 260,000 visitors from across 38 countries. This exhibition will run longer. There will be so much program activation happening within that time span from our curatorial team and the education team.

**How will the International spotlight the city of Pittsburgh and local communities?**

Pittsburgh is a spot on the international map — it is an International city. The museum's commitment to the Carnegie International over time is meant to amplify that quality every four years and to shed greater light on the international qualities that exist in the city already. The exhibition historically back in the 1890s was paintings from around the world coming to Pittsburgh and Pittsburghers not having the ability to travel as widely as we now can. It felt to them like the world was coming to Pittsburgh.

**What elements might visitors be surprised to find as part of the International?**

Artist Torkwase Dyson is presenting work at the Kamin Science Center. She is actually making an animated planetarium show. The subject is her research area beginning in the sea floors of the Caribbean and exploring extraction economies.

Another creative practice is the partnership with the Sogetsu School in Tokyo, Japan. It is a long-running art school and has an ikebana practice and teaches the art of flower arrangement. The artist Sofu Teshigahara, founder of the Sogetsu School of Ikebana, and disciples of the Sogetsu School will come to the museum to create an immersive ikebana display as part of the exhibition. The display will be in collaboration with the Pittsburgh chapter of the Sogetsu School.

So from planetariums to Japanese floral design, there will be many non-traditional art forms that are not just art with a capital A.

### **What do you hope that other institutions and museums might take away from the International?**

This is a curatorial project, with the museum investing in curatorial research to imagine the International. I hope what other museums, curators and colleagues in the field might find is a boundary-pushing exhibition that aims to contribute something to the history of exhibitions and the future of curating.

It speaks to the field, but also to anyone who might come and engage with it and choose to have art in their lives. There's something for everyone to identify with in the International.

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**Shaylah Brown** is a features reporter covering all things culture, including health, food, real estate and people doing great things. A New Jersey native, she is enjoying learning about Western Pa. through the lens of art, dance and nature.

✉ [sbrown@post-gazette.com](mailto:sbrown@post-gazette.com)

✕ [@shaylah\\_brown](https://twitter.com/shaylah_brown)