

Art in Conversation syllabus, OLLI, June Mini 2026

Fridays, 9:45-11:15 on Zoom, June 5, 12, 19, 26

Study Group Leaders: Donna Jonte, Carla White Freyvogel, Kelly Richman-Abdul

Overview: Guided by museum educators, delve into the meaningful conversations that emerge when works of art are considered in tandem. We will look closely at a selection of modern and contemporary artworks, sharing observations, questions, and information. Challenging ourselves, we will ask how these works connect to each other, to us, and to the world. Over four Zoom sessions, we will virtually visit two current exhibitions, *Manet & Morisot* (Cleveland Museum of Art) and *Miró and the United States* (The Phillips Collection); consider a gallery installation of Edgar Degas and Simone Leigh at the Baltimore Museum of Art; and step behind the scenes into The Phillips Collection's curatorial project that pairs local DC photographer Charles Rumph (American, 1932-2019) with members of the Stieglitz Circle.

June 5: *Manet & Morisot*

Guided by Donna Jonte, we will explore the exhibition *Manet & Morisot*, organized by the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco in collaboration with the Cleveland Museum of Art, now on view in Cleveland until July 5, 2026.

Manet & Morisot is the first exhibition to investigate the artistic relationship between Édouard Manet, known as the father of modern painting, and Berthe Morisot, one of the founders of the Impressionist movement. The exhibition covers 15 years, between 1868 and 1883, as the artists collected each other's work, shared ideas, and influenced each other, correcting the common assumption that Morisot was mere muse and student to Manet. As Cleveland Museum of Art curator Heather Lemonedes Brown explains: "While Manet's 10 portraits of Morisot are indeed beguiling, and she did look to him for inspiration and approval early in her career, by the mid-1870s, Manet had begun to follow Morisot's example, emulating her choice of subjects, brilliant colors, and rapid, fluttering brushstrokes. This exhibition explores the complexities of their relationship and examines the ways in which they influenced one another while maintaining their individuality and unique styles."

June 12: *Miró and the United States*

In this session Donna Jonte will lead a virtual tour and discussion of *Miró and the United States*, the special exhibition on view until July 5, 2026 at The Phillips Collection, which pairs Joan Miró (Catalan, 1893-1983) with American artists between 1947 and 1968, when Miró traveled to America seven times. This is a story of friendship and reciprocal influence:

Miró was as influenced by American artists as they were by him. We will see works by Alexander Calder, Louise Bourgeois, Louise Nevelson, Lee Krasner, Elaine de Kooning, Perle Fine, Joan Mitchell, Janet Sobel, Norman Lewis, Jackson Pollock, and Helen Frankenthaler, among others, alongside Miró's. Miró wrote to his New York gallerist Pierre Matisse: "In the future world, America, with its energy and vitality, must play a leading role. I have to be in New York to be in direct, personal contact with your country; my work will benefit from that shock."

June 19: BMA and NGA

Carla White Freyvogel will illuminate some of the ways local museums are engaging viewers with unexpected curatorial choices. In the Cone Wing, The Baltimore Museum of Art places Edgar Degas's *Little Dancer, Aged 14* (cast 1919-1921) in conversation with Simone Leigh's *Meredith* (2020), a larger-than-life, bare-breasted bronze figure wearing a raffia skirt. As BMA curator and Head of Contemporary Art Jessica Bell Brown says, "Showing Leigh in context with Degas amplifies the complexities that Leigh was grappling with in her sculpture, which really inhabits the form of Degas's bronzed ballerina to tell a different story altogether of Black diasporic women across generations."

We'll compare this installation to one currently on view at the National Gallery of Art. NGA's exhibition *Back and Forth* connects four paintings: local artist Rozeal's *afro.died, T* (2011), Cezanne's *Boy in a Red Waistcoat* (1888-90), and two works by Titian: *Ranuccio Farnese* (1541-42) and *Venus with a Mirror* (1555).

If we were curators, what artworks might we pair with Degas, Leigh, Rozeal., Cezanne, or Titian? What stories would we find in these conversations?

June 26: Behind the Scenes: Developing an Exhibition

Kelly Richman-Abdul, the Research Fellow for the Charles Rumph Collection at The Phillips Collection, is developing an exhibition and conducting curatorial research on this significant gift of photography. Kelly will take us behind the scenes of exhibition planning. We will learn why Charles Rumph (1932-2019) will be in conversation with members of the Stieglitz Circle and how this kind of exhibition aligns with the vision of the museum.