

ARTS & CULTURE

Museum Month offers 30 spots with one membership

Membership at a local museum offers perks year-round: free admission, early registration opportunities for high-demand public programs (including summer camps), discounts at sublime museum stores and cafes, etc.



Dave Walker

Less obvious, but maybe as important, is that a museum membership supports your favorite museum's

mission. Curators, archivists, historians, educators, registrars, catalogers, preparators, front-of-house staff and other museum professionals craft gallery experiences, execute engaging public programs and preserve all the artwork and artifacts.

Your friends, neighbors, bowling or barstool buddies and parent-group allies working these professions are all essential players in the New Orleans cultural economy.

Think of a museum website's "support" button as a digital tip jar paying toward the preservation of our history, arts and culture.

A museum membership's value expands exponentially each August, when the New Orleans & Company Museum Month promotion opens the doors of dozens of institutions. All month long, one museum membership provides free admission for two at 30 or so participating institutions.

The list is online at neworleans.com/museum-month. The site also contains an explainer about a "passport" program that awards a free museum membership to the most intrepid museumgoers, handy membership links to all of the museums that offer them, as well as suggested itineraries sorted by theme: history, art, for families, etc.

The itinerary I'm offering here is specific to "changing" or "special" — meaning "temporary" — exhibits, so see 'em while you got 'em.

For most of these, there are episodes on my "Museumgoer" podcast featuring interviews with curators, collectors and artists. There's a blog post at themuseumgoer.com with links.

■ At the **New Orleans Jazz Museum**, "The First Piano Professors and Lost Music of Early New Orleans"



Visitors explore the U.S. Freedom Pavilion: The Boeing Center at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans.



PHOTO BY DAVE WALKER

'Michalopoulos: Mystical Expressionism' is on display at the Cabildo.

tells the story of the local 19th-century composers who predated jazz.

■ At the **Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience**, "Holocaust Survivors in a New Land: The New Americans Social Club of New Orleans" tells the story of European refugees who made new lives for themselves in postwar America.

■ If you're still gripped with semiquincentennial fever, there are three exhibits to see in the French Quarter: "American Revolution: The Augmented Exhibition" at **The Historic New Orleans Collection** and "Gálvez and Louisi-

ana in the American Revolution" and "Bienvenue Lafayette" at **The Cabildo**.

■ For art lovers, there's "Burke's Delight: The Stacey and Michael Burke Collection" at the **Ogden Museum of Southern Art**, where the exhibit "Louisiana Contemporary 2026" has opened just in time for Museum Month; "Michalopoulos: Mystical Expressionism" is on the top floor of the Cabildo; and "Sèvres Magnifique: French Porcelain from the Collection of Thomas B. Lemann" can be found at the **New Orleans Museum of Art**.

■ At **The National WWII Museum**, there

are two changing exhibits now on view: "Come Back Fighting: USS New Orleans at War" and the traveling exhibit "Drawn to Combat: Bill Mauldin and the Art of War."

Note: **The Presbytère** is closed through Sept. 30 for building upgrades, so the lovely exhibit "Origins of New Orleans Black Carnival Society: The Story of the Illinois Clubs" didn't make this list. Co-curated by Kelly Dorsey Parker and Kim Vaz-Deville, it will remain on view through March 15, so consider it a post-Museum Month priority.

Museum Month is also an excellent time to explore local museums that may be flying under your radar.

■ **The American Italian Cultural Center** in the Central Business District outlines the social, cultural and commercial contributions made by that immigrant community, as well as the many challenges its members faced in their new land. (Thanks to Louis Prima, y'all!)

■ **The Louisiana Civil Rights Museum** near the downriver entrance to the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center offers an engaging introduction to the local mid-20th century fight for Black equality.

■ **The Tate, Etienne and Prevost Center** is a Lower 9th Ward landmark for civil rights that's been refash-

ON THE CALENDAR

■ Friends of the Cabildo will launch a monthlong series of virtual weekly lectures at 6 p.m. Tuesday. The topic this time: **"The Galvez Regiment Composure"** by Robert Freeland. friendsofthecabildo.org.

■ At 12:30 p.m. Wednesday at the New Orleans Museum of Art, preparator Louise Neal will lead a gallery talk on the Ella West Freeman Wall Project. noma.org.

■ The Historic New Orleans Collection's Antiques Forum, which this year carries the theme **"Material Belief: Objects of Faith, Spirit and Tradition,"** takes place Friday through Aug. 9. A ticketed event with add-on field trips, receptions, meals and vault tours. This year, the forum will feature a free session open to nonregistrants at 3 p.m. Friday. Its theme is **"Fashioning Belief and Commitment."** hnoc.org.

■ The Historic BK House and Gardens will stage a free **"Bicentennial Birthday Bash"** block party from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Aug. 11. Its theme is "Boldly defying demolition since 1826!" bkhouse.org.

ioned into an interpretive center.

■ **The Great American Alligator Museum** is a little kitschy (gator salt-and-pepper shakers, anyone?) but fascinating in its exploration of the roles of reptiles in our lives.

Finally, a few Museum Month participants are offering special tours and events:

■ Guided tours at **The Historic New Orleans Collection** (normally a ticketed offering at the otherwise free museum) are part of the promotion.

■ **The Hermann-Grima and Gallier Historic Houses** will offer after-hours events on consecutive Wednesdays (Aug. 19 at Gallier, Aug. 26 at Hermann-Grima), where members of other museums receive a \$5 discount.

Dave Walker focuses on behind-the-scenes coverage of the region's many museums here and at www.themuseumgoer.com. Email Dave at dave@themuseumgoer.com

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