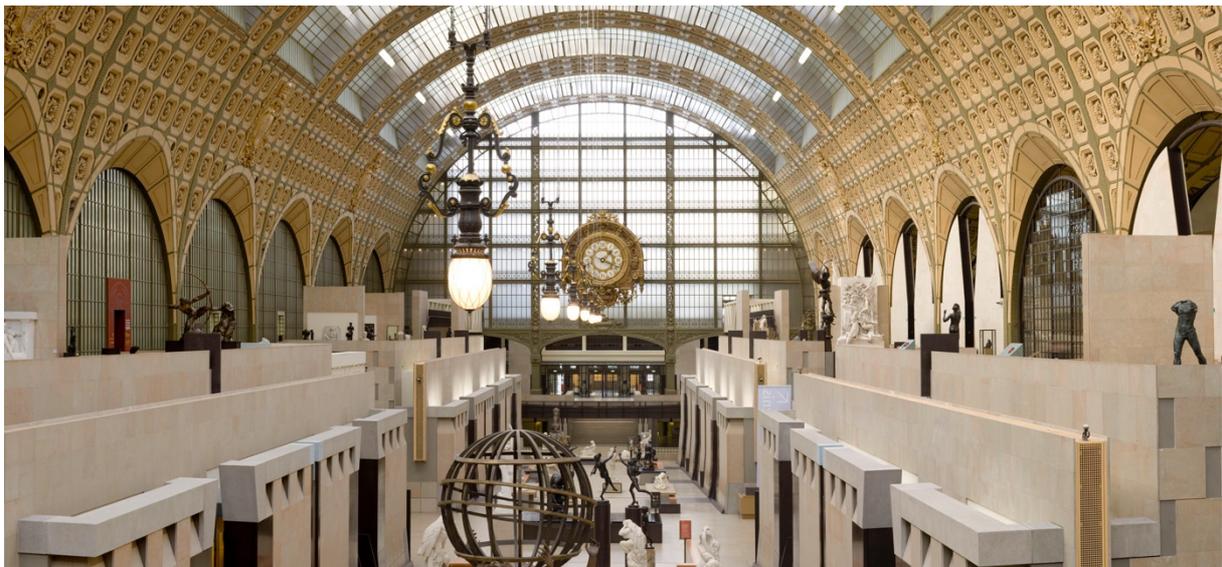




**The Musée d'Orsay Announces the Launch of a Major Expansion Project Titled  
'Orsay Grand Ouvert' ('Orsay Wide Open')  
and a Lead Gift of €20 Million From an Anonymous American Donor  
Through the American Friends of Musée d'Orsay**

*The groundbreaking and transformative project will expand the museum's exhibition space, establish new education center and create a new center for international research*

*€20 million lead gift from an anonymous American donor through the American Friends of Musée d'Orsay, along with additional fundraising efforts, will finance the project*



Musée d'Orsay. © Sophie Crépy

Paris, France—(March 5, 2020). The Institution of les Musées d'Orsay et de l'Orangerie announced today the launch of 'Orsay Grand Ouvert' ('Orsay Wide Open'), a major transformation project that will expand the Musée d'Orsay's exhibition space and establish new centers for education and international research. Planned to be completed by 2026, 'Orsay Wide Open' will convert the 13,000 square feet of spaces currently used for administrative offices into new galleries and will create the new Center for Education and International Research. Once completed, the Musée d'Orsay's entire landmark building, a 19th-century train station, will be used for the benefit of the public and to showcase more of its collection. The project is being supported by both the museum's own and private funds, and has just received a lead gift of €20 million from an anonymous American donor through the American Friends of Musée d'Orsay (AFMO), a non-profit 501(c)(3) with the mission to raise public awareness of and financial support for the revitalized Musée d'Orsay and its sister institution the Musée de l'Orangerie, and to encourage gifts of art to these museums.

Laurence des Cars, President of les Musées d'Orsay et de l'Orangerie, said, "We are thrilled to announce the launch of this ambitious project, thanks, in part, to the generous €20 million gift from an anonymous American donor made through the American Friends of Musée d'Orsay (AFMO). 'Orsay Wide Open' will allow us to achieve a core objective of the museum: to offer visitors a comfortable experience in spacious galleries and with educational resources that enrich their understanding of our collection and the history of art and culture. We look forward to the new possibilities the expansion will bring to the museum and to welcoming and sparking a deeper connection with our visitors."

The Musée d'Orsay's collection has grown significantly in recent years, as a result of an ambitious acquisition policy, as well as through major gifts, including the recent landmark donation by the American couple Marlene Hays and the late Spencer Hays, longtime patrons of American Friends of Musée d'Orsay. The Hays contributed nearly 300 French artworks from the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th century, including works by Pierre Bonnard, Henri Matisse, Amedeo Modigliani and Édouard Vuillard, in 2016 and 2019. As the museum's collection has grown, so has its attendance, reaching a record of 3.6 million visitors in 2019. 'Orsay Wide Open' marks a new chapter for the museum to preserve, study and present its growing collection for the benefit of visitors coming from across the globe.

Elizabeth Kehler, Board Chair of American Friends of Musée d'Orsay, added, "Through the generosity of an anonymous American donor, AFMO is making a meaningful contribution to this game-changing initiative — 'Orsay Wide Open'— which will have a positive impact on Orsay's 3.6 million visitors annually and indeed the city of Paris. Americans have long had passion for French art and culture, and we are thrilled when this passion turns into patronage such as this transformative gift. On behalf of the Board of AFMO, we thank this anonymous American donor for their extraordinary generosity, and we hope this gift will inspire other American donors to join us in supporting the Musée d'Orsay at this time of vibrant growth."

**'Orsay Wide Open' is currently planned to be completed over the next six years:**

**2023–2024: Creation of an Education Center and an International Research and Resource Center**

To enhance the museum's educational offering to young visitors, the 4th floor of the museum will house a new 7,000 square feet Education Center. Following the example of some American and European museums, this new space will be dedicated to children, school groups and families. "This *petite école du regard* will bring together varied approaches and disciplines and will use digital technology to its fullest potential. It will expose young visitors to the joys of contemplating, understanding and creating art, based on the museum's collection *par excellence* from the mid-19th through the early 20th centuries, a period that remains essential to understanding our world today," explains Laurence des Cars.

Additionally, a new International Research and Resource Center will be built in close proximity to the museum's collection and will integrate the museum's existing Archives and Library. The Center's mission will be to provide resources for scholars to advance research on the important artistic periods represented in the museum's collection. Through national and international collaborations with leading universities and other partners, the Center will welcome an international network of students and researchers.

The Education Center and the International Research and Resource Center will open to the public in 2023–2024.

**2025–2026: Creation of a New Wing dedicated to displaying the collection**

The project also encompasses the creation of a New Wing to display the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist collection. The entire South Wing, which covers more than 13,000 square feet and is

currently used as administrative offices, will be reorganized to substantially increase the museum's exhibition space, allowing for a new artistic display and unique and in-depth understanding of the masterpieces of major artists such as Monet, Manet, Degas, Cézanne Van Gogh, Gauguin, Bonnard and Vuillard.

The Public Institution of the Musées d'Orsay et de l'Orangerie is actively pursuing private funding to make 'Orsay Wide Open' possible.

For more information, please visit <https://www.musee-orsay.fr/en>.

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### **About the Musée d'Orsay**

In the heart of Paris on the banks of the Seine, the Musée d'Orsay shares with audiences from all parts of the world, since 1986, a unique collection of paintings, sculpture, decorative arts, photography and graphic arts that recounts the great diversity and evolution of Western art from 1848 to 1914. Set in a historic building of the former Orsay railway station, which was built for the Universal Exhibition of 1900, this national institution is also home to the world's largest Impressionist collection.

### **About the American Friends of Musée d'Orsay**

The American Friends of Musée d'Orsay (AFMO), established in 2010, is an American 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to raising public awareness and financial support for the Musée d'Orsay and its sister institution the Musée de l'Orangerie. Patrons of AFMO contribute to the museums' exhibition and educational programs; collection restoration, conservation and acquisitions, including gifts of art; gallery renovations; and scholarly publications, especially Franco-American projects. Members support cultural enrichment for the museums' nearly 5 million annual visitors from around the world.

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