



Volunteer Manual

Updated September 2025

Our Mission, Vision, and Values

Fleisher is a source of inspiration, creativity, and community. Every year, more than 20,000 people experience the transformative power of art by participating in our classes, tuition-free classes, workshops, exhibitions, and community-based programs.

Founded in 1898, we are one of the country's oldest nonprofit community art schools and are committed to advancing the vision of our founder, Samuel S. Fleisher, who believed that art is one of society's greatest assets and equalizers, and from the doorway of his Graphic Sketch Club, "invited the world to come and learn art."

Our Mission

Fleisher's mission is to make art accessible to everyone, regardless of economic means, background, or artistic experience.

Our Core Values

Fleisher's core values are rooted in the ideals of Samuel Fleisher:

The Artist in Us All — Within every individual are the ingredients for original artistic expression.

Art is a Pathway to Fulfillment — An individual's ability to use art is a vital means for emotional and intellectual exploration and growth.

Art Enriches the Community — By nurturing each individual's creative potential, we aim to provide social, cultural, and economic benefits to the community as a whole.

History of Fleisher Art Memorial

Fleisher Art Memorial was founded by Samuel Fleisher, born in 1871 as the grandson of German Jewish immigrants. His father and uncle opened three of the first worsted wool factories in South Philadelphia and grew to become leaders in textile manufacturing. Samuel Fleisher joined the family business in 1892 after his graduation from the University of Pennsylvania and continued to help increase the family fortune.

Samuel Fleisher was known for being concerned about the well-being of his factory workers and believed that art had the power to enrich their individual lives and relieve his workers from the tedium of existence in the factories. He believed art, as a creative outlet and means of self-exploration, could be transformative to the lives of even the poorest residents of the city. He began inviting neighborhood boys to art classes held at the Jewish Union Building on 4th and Bainbridge. He called it the Graphic Sketch Club, and it soon came to include all ages and nationalities – anyone could come and learn art. Students were asked only to pay for materials, and classes were held in a relaxed environment that encouraged students to enjoy the process of creating art.

As the school grew, Fleisher acquired the building at 740 Catharine Street, and, in 1922, the Romanesque Church of the Evangelist next door. Sam Fleisher was involved in philanthropic activities concerning the plight of the urban poor and immigrant populations outside of his Graphic Sketch Club, but it is this institution which took on his name after his death in 1944. He left an endowment to the school so that it may continue to provide arts education to everyone, regardless of any perceived barriers such as economic background or experience. Today, Fleisher Art Memorial carries on in the honor and tradition of Samuel Fleisher, providing artmaking programs to the community and advancing the vision that having access to artistic experience is integral to our society.

Contact Information

Fleisher Art Memorial 719 Catharine St. Philadelphia, PA 19147 www.fleisher.org	Center for Works on Paper 705 Christian St. Philadelphia, PA 19147
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Fleisher Main Phone Number: 215-922-3456		
Front Desk at 719 Catherine St.	info@fleisher.org	ext. 300

Key Fleisher Staff		
Suzanne L. Seesman <i>Manager of Adult Education</i>	lseesman@fleisher.org	ext. 324
Rachel Hsu <i>Manager of Children and Youth Education</i>	Rhsu@	ext. 348
Caitlin Deutsch <i>Director of Education</i>	cdeutsch@fleisher.org	ext. 312
Julianne Borst <i>Education Coordinator</i>	jborst@fleisher.org	ext. 348
Layla Ehsan <i>Community Partnership in the Arts Manager</i>	lehsan@fleisher.org	ext. 310
Jackson Kramer <i>705 Coordinator (Printmaking, Screen Print, Darkroom and Digital Lab)</i>	jkrammer@fleisher.org	ext. 301
Gerard Silva <i>Director of Community Engagement and Exhibitions</i>	gsilva@fleisher.org	ext. 323

Community Guidelines

Community Guidelines The mission of Fleisher Art Memorial is to make art accessible to all, regardless of economic means, background or artistic experience. Our core values include the recognition that everyone can be an artist, promoting art as a pathway to fulfillment; and building communities enriched by art. Since 1898, Fleisher has fostered a safe, encouraging, and inclusive creative community. Our Community Guidelines were collaboratively written and agreed upon by members of Fleisher's adult student body and staff. These guidelines were designed to ensure a safe, encouraging, and joyful environment for our entire community, including students, faculty, models, and staff. We expect all participants in the adult program to abide by our guidelines and to report any incidents that violate them to our Manager of Adult Education, Suzanne Seesman, at lseesman@fleisher.org. We will proactively enforce these guidelines and determine appropriate consequences based on the severity of the incident. These guidelines may be updated over time.

At the end of each class term, students will have an opportunity to share feedback through evaluation surveys. As part of the Fleisher community, we expect and encourage the following behaviors and actions:

- Fleisher is a safe place that honors each individual's experience and background, where our diverse experiences are seen and celebrated - not just accepted or tolerated.
- Fleisher's community is accepting, open, thoughtful, kind, and willing to speak out and take a stand against harmful behaviors, language, and comments.
- Faculty and students encourage each other to express their individual artistic vision and to evolve as artists, to embrace "failure" and overcome the fear of making mistakes.
- Our students and faculty are curious about diverse ways to create and experience art. They stay present, open to feedback, and are willing to listen to each other.

Everyone should be treated with respect, including staff, faculty and students. Fleisher will not accept or tolerate the following behaviors:

- Dehumanizing, mean, aggressive, violent, or destructive behavior.
- Excluding, disrespecting, or bullying people based on race, gender identity, ability, religion, sexual preference, political stance, language ability, immigration status, artistic experience, or economic status.
- Being dismissive of other people's opinions, elitist, judgmental or criticizing others harshly.
- Being destructive and harmful to studio spaces, other people's artwork or materials and equipment.

Students who behave in a disruptive or inappropriate manner are subject to removal from the classroom at the instructor's request, and depending upon the severity may be asked not to return to Fleisher.

Volunteer Opportunities

ColorWheels

ColorWheels is a mobile art studio that brings creative experiences to neighborhoods across Philadelphia to engage a diverse audience in interactive art making, community exhibitions, and art making festivals. It's an exciting and inviting way for Fleisher to take our art making experiences beyond our Catharine Street campus and into the hands of our neighbors.

By bringing hands-on, creative projects right to community centers, parks and neighborhood festivals, Color Wheels makes art accessible, engaging, and collaborative. It's a strategic extension of Fleisher's institution-wide effort to expand and diversify our audience, building bridges between our offsite and onsite programming. Color Wheels delivers culturally relevant arts experiences in trusted community settings to eliminate barriers, create access, and increase participation among diverse audiences

Annual Fleisher Programming:

Volunteers help make several annual traditions possible including, but not limited to:

Print Love-In - February

Join us to make your own valentines while exploring a wide range of printmaking techniques from blockprinting to screenprint. No experience is necessary as our artists will be on hand to help you as you work with designs donated by some of the region's best printmakers.

Indonesian Festival – August

Fleisher has teamed up with Gapura annually for our Annual Indonesian Festival. The outdoor event is free and open to the public, and is the culmination of a month-long series of events by Gapura, the Indonesian Community Center in Philadelphia. Themes change annually.

Day of the Dead - October

Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, has been observed across Latin America for centuries as a day to honor and celebrate the lives of loved ones lost. Join Fleisher and the official Día de los Muertos committee La Calaca Flaca (Skinny Skeleton) during our annual procession and celebration.

HANDMADE - December

HANDMADE is an indoor juried craft market organized by Fleisher Art Memorial to promote local vendors and artists. Featuring a wide array of handmade and artisanal items, this annual market is the perfect place to find holiday gifts at a range of prices to accommodate all budgets. Shoppers can expect quality handmade goods that reflect Fleisher's offerings, promoting diversity and inclusivity; the event will highlight vendors from the El Mercado Cultural program—a unique initiative at Fleisher focusing on the entrepreneurship of Latinx artisans and creatives—as well as a selection of local artists and craftspeople.

Behind the Scenes and Between Term Prep Support

Help us get ready for the next wave of creativity! Between each term, volunteers play a key role in preparing classrooms and studios for both youth and adult programs. Opportunities include organizing art supplies, refreshing shared spaces, assisting with materials prep, and making sure studios are welcoming and ready for students. Your support behind the scenes helps ensure a smooth start for everyone.

Volunteer Expectations and Procedures

- The minimum age requirement for all volunteers is 16 years of age or older.
- Communicate via e-mail.
- Attend required orientations and submit all required clearances.
- Demonstrate a cooperative, friendly, professional manner when dealing with members of the Fleisher community including program participants, staff, and fellow volunteers.

Arrival

Please arrive on time or early for your shift. Shifts are scheduled with the expectation that you will arrive prepared to begin. When you arrive for your shift, check in with the assigned staff member. The location and contact person will be shared in advance.

Personal Items

There is a refrigerator on the first floor of the main building where volunteers may store food or lunches. Personal belongings, if kept to a minimum, may be stored in our lobby closet. During offsite events, personal items may be stored in the ColorWheels van.

Attendance and Scheduling Conflicts

Volunteers must be reliable and conduct themselves with professionalism while performing volunteer duties. If you have a conflict with your shift, please inform the Fleisher program or event point person with at least 24 hours' notice. If your shift is less than 24 hours away, please inform the Fleisher program or event point person and email info@fleisher.org to ensure that your message is received. Please share your full name, shift time and position for which you are scheduled. You may also call the front desk at 215-922-3456 ext. 300 to speak to a Visitor Services Assistant.

Appearance

Wear clothes that you are comfortable getting a little messy in. Closed-toe shoes are recommended when working in classrooms and may be required for certain programs or events.

Volunteer Policies

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- Excluding, disrespecting, or bullying people based on race, gender identity, ability, religion, sexual preference, political stance, language ability, immigration status, artistic experience, or economic status.
- Being dismissive of other people's opinions, elitist, judgmental or criticizing others harshly.
- Being destructive and harmful to studio spaces, other people's artwork or materials and equipment.

Safety

Safety is everyone's concern. Fleisher has safety policies and procedures in place to reduce the likelihood of workplace accidents or incidents. For a full list of health and safety guidelines please review our [Studio Handbook available on the Fleisher website](#).

- If you are concerned about a situation that looks dangerous or could lead to injury of people or property, find and alert the nearest staff person. If onsite dial x300 for the front desk.
- For any injuries, locate the nearest staff person or dial x300 for the front desk. **If there is an emergency, don't wait, call 911 immediately** – Fleisher's front desk can also call 911 on your behalf.
- Each studio as well as the ColorsWheel van has a basic first aid kit. The front desk has a larger first aid kit with additional supplies.
- All injuries on Fleisher property must be reported to the staff person you are working with, who will ensure that an incident report is completed.

Incident Reporting

An Incident Report is needed every time First Aid is applied, a fight or disturbance occurs, or in the event of harassment or inappropriate behavior. The Incident Report form is available at the front desk and in the ColorWheels van. Please submit the form to a staff person and if that is not an option, leave it with the front desk. In addition, notify your program lead via phone or email.

Child Protection, Clearances, and Background Checks

It is Fleisher's goal to ensure that all children (individuals under the age of 18 years) participating in Fleisher-directed programs are protected from abuse or inappropriate behavior occurring at Fleisher or in connection

with a Fleisher program. Please review our [Child Protection Policy](#) for detailed information on maintaining childrens' safety and wellbeing in Fleisher programs.

Our [Child Protection Policy](#) also includes detailed instructions for obtaining clearances and background checks. Fleisher requires the below clearances and background checks for volunteers ages 18+ prior to participation in programming or events:

- PA State Criminal Record Check (free)
- Child Abuse History Clearance (free)
- FBI Background Check & Fingerprinting (\$24.20):
 - *OR for volunteers living in PA for 10 or more years: complete the free FBI Fingerprint Waiver*

Please send all clearance documentation to clearances@fleisher.org.

Fleisher does not reimburse volunteers for the costs associated with gaining necessary clearances. If cost is prohibitive, please email volunteers@fleisher.org.

Discrimination and Harassment

Fleisher has a long-standing commitment to a work environment that respects the dignity and worth of everyone. Fleisher is committed to a policy of non-discrimination and encourages diversity among its staff. Fleisher does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, age, religion, national origin, color ancestry, citizenship, disability, veteran status, gender identity, genetic information, sexual orientation, or any other characteristics protected by federal, state, and or local law. Fleisher requires staff, including volunteers, to adhere to the standards of Fleisher's policy on non-discrimination and fair treatment. Failure to adhere to this policy may lead to removal from the volunteer program.

Promptly report all incidents of unlawful discrimination or harassment to Caitlin Deutsch, Director of Education so the incident can be investigated.

Ethics

The success of Fleisher's mission, programs and business operations is built on our staff's ethical conduct, including volunteers and interns. Fleisher's reputation for integrity and excellence requires careful observance of the spirit and letter of all applicable laws and regulations, as well as a scrupulous regard for the highest standards of ethical conduct and personal integrity. In general, the use of good judgement, based on high ethical principles will lead to appropriate conduct.

Conflicts of Interest

Volunteers must refrain from any private business or personal activity that would be or appear to be in conflict with the best interest of Fleisher or that would be likely to adversely affect the confidence of the public in the integrity of Fleisher. Volunteers may not accept gratuities for any services rendered to the public.

Intellectual Property

Records created by volunteers during the performance of their volunteer assignments are the property of Fleisher, regardless of the medium (e.g. paper, electronic, or other).