

# THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## ART INSTITUTE WELCOMES SUMMER 2008!

\* TARGET FREE THURSDAY AND FRIDAY EVENINGS UNTIL 9 PM STARTING MAY 29 \*

\* "PASSPORT TO AFRICA" FESTIVAL AND *BENIN—KINGS AND RITUALS* EXHIBITION  
CELEBRATE ARTS AND CULTURE OF AFRICA AS THEME FOR SUMMER\*

The Art Institute of Chicago announces the return of its wildly popular **Target Free Summer Evenings** beginning **May 29, the Thursday after Memorial Day**. Throughout June, July, and August, the Art Institute will offer extended evening hours—**until 9:00 p.m.**—on **Thursdays and Fridays**, with **free admission after 5:00 p.m.** on those evenings. Target is the generous sponsor for "Target Free Summer Evenings."

The Art Institute will serve as a gateway to major Loop happenings and festivals—particularly the events in Millennium Park, the music festivals in Grant Park, and the Taste of Chicago. The museum's Garden Restaurant will join in the summer celebration and feature live music on Thursday and Friday evenings, while on select Saturdays, the front steps of the museum will host musicians and performers to entertain visitors and pedestrians alike.

To complement its extended hours on these evenings, the museum has added to its schedule lectures and gallery walks, family activities, a light menu at the Garden Restaurant, and live music al fresco in lovely McKinlock Court. On May 29, Japanese scholar and culture expert **Shozo Sato** will kick off the Art Institute's summer celebration with an intimate evening of *ikebana* (Japanese floral arranging) demonstration. Sato will create several flower arrangements as he teaches the philosophy underlying this ancient and contemporary practice. The program begins at 6:00 p.m. in Fullerton Hall and is free to all.

Additional gallery tours have been added on Target Free Thursday and Friday evenings: at 5:30 p.m., museum educators showcase works around a particular theme, while at 7:00 p.m. visitors can learn about highlights of the museum's magnificent permanent collection. The Art Institute's Target Free Summer Evenings 2008 will conclude on Friday, August 29.

### **"Passport to Africa" Celebration at the Art Institute**

The Art Institute explores the African continent this summer. The **"Passport to Africa"** series—which features a variety of ancient and contemporary expressions such as art, music, theater, and movement from across sub-Saharan Africa—begins July 10 with the exhibition *Benin—Kings and Rituals: Court Arts from Nigeria*. This exhibition can only be seen at the Art Institute and will not be mounted at any other North American museum. The exhibition showcases approximately 220 royal sculptures and artifacts from the Benin Kingdom of Nigeria, including finely cast bronze figures, altar heads, wall plaques, and staffs of office; sculpted ivories; royal regalia and jewelry in brass, coral, and ivory; and other accoutrements of life at court across six centuries. Planned with the most prominent scholars of Benin art, history, and culture, as well as the cooperation of reigning Oba Erediauwa and the National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Nigeria, the exhibition will bring international attention and new perspectives to Benin art.

Other highlights during the museum's celebration of African culture are musical and performance programs from many artists, including the **Muntu Dance Theatre Chicago (July 19)**, **Yves François and Rocambu Jazz (August 2)**, **the Occidental Brothers Dance Band International (August 16)**, and **Taylor/Morikeba Duo (September 13)**. The Art Institute has also partnered with the Old Town School of Folk Music to present a line-up of stellar world and folk musicians—such as the **Victor Pichardo Group**, **Lamajamal**, the **Teflons**, and the **Eric Noden Duo**—in McKinlock Court on Thursday and Friday evenings. Additional gallery talks in July and August will focus on African art in the museum's permanent collection. For a full list of "Passport to Africa" events, log on to the Art Institute's Web site: [www.artic.edu](http://www.artic.edu).

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**MUSEUM HOURS:**

10:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday  
10:30 a.m.–8:00 p.m. Thursday  
10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Saturday, Sunday  
TARGET FREE EVENINGS THURSDAY AFTER 5:00 p.m.

**SUMMER HOURS (from Memorial Day to Labor Day):**

10:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday  
10:30 a.m.–9:00 p.m. Thursday, Friday  
10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Saturday, Sunday  
TARGET FREE SUMMER EVENINGS THURSDAY AND FRIDAY AFTER 5:00 p.m.

FREE FEBRUARY 1 TO 29

Closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

**Please check [www.artic.edu](http://www.artic.edu) before your visit.**

**Admission: Adults, \$12.00; children 12 and over, students, and seniors, \$7.00; children under 12 free; members always free.** Free Evenings are free to all, except for certain special exhibitions that may require full or extra admission fee. City of Chicago residents with Chicago Public Library cards can borrow a "Check Us Out" card from any library branch for free general admission to the nine members of Museums in the Park, including the Art Institute of Chicago. To reach the Art Institute on the World Wide Web, contact us at: [www.artic.edu](http://www.artic.edu)

**The Art Institute of Chicago is a museum in Chicago's Grant Park, located across from Millennium Park.**