FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM YEARBOOK: 2025 IN REVIEW

In 2025, the International Fellowship Program at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection welcomed university students and recent graduates from thirty-seven countries. Each brought their own perspectives, interests, and experiences, creating a vibrant international community.

For many, it was a first experience of living abroad and an opportunity to become part of the daily life of one of Europe's leading collections of modern art. Alongside supporting the museum's activities, fellows explored Venice and its cultural landscape, building friendships that will last well beyond their time at the museum.

This yearbook offers a snapshot of the people, places, and projects that shaped the 2025 Program, celebrating a remarkable year at the museum and in the city it calls home.

GUGGENHEIM

ART IN CONVERSATION

Every day, the Fellowship Program brings participants into conversation with visitors from around the world. Through talks, tours, and informal exchanges, fellows share fresh perspectives on modern art and the life of Peggy Guggenheim.

- **Peggy Talks** introducing visitors to the life and legacy of Peggy Guggenheim, exploring her pioneering role as a collector and her devotion to modern art.
- **Art Talks** exploring individual works from the permanent collection and temporary exhibitions, from Cubism to Abstract Expressionism.
- **Exhibition Talks** accompanying *Marina Apollonio: Beyond the Circle*, *Maria Helena Vieira da Silva: Anatomy of Space* and *Manu-Facture: The Ceramics of Lucio Fontana*.
- **Weaves of Iron, Shapes of Glass**, a special series of presentations for Venice Glass Week celebrating Claire Falkenstein's iconic entrance gates and the museum's glass collection.
- A week of talks marking **Free Week for Venetians**, exploring Peggy Guggenheim's enduring relationship with the city.
- Drawing the Guggenheim, a collaborative initiative bringing together the Guggenheim museums through their architecture, with presentations focusing on the history and unique character of Palazzo Venier dei Leoni.
- **Themed talks and presentations** developed for a range of local, national and international initiatives, including **Art Night Venezia, National Day for Families at the Museum, International Holocaust Remembrance Day**.

Public engagement extended beyond scheduled talks through **Cultural Mediation**, with fellows inviting visitors into informal conversations throughout the galleries. These spontaneous encounters often became some of the most memorable moments of the program, encouraging fresh perspectives and unexpected discoveries.

Before the end of the experience, each fellow also presented an original **seminar** inspired by their time at the museum. The subjects were as varied as the participants themselves, spanning art history, museum practice, accessibility, and original creative projects.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Throughout the year, fellows met staff from across the museum, with presentations from **Education**, **Visitor Services**, **Curatorial**, **Conservation**, **Special Events, Corporate Development**, **Publications**, **Individual Development and Membership**, and th**e Registrars**. These encounters offered a behind-the-scenes look at the many departments that keep the Peggy Guggenheim Collection running.

A monthly highlight was the welcome tour of the collection led by **Director Karole P. B. Vail**, while a private tour of the palazzo with one of the museum's educators introduced fellows to its history and permanent collection.

Temporary exhibitions brought further opportunities to learn directly from curators **Flavia Frigeri** and **Sharon Hecker**, both Guggenheim alumni. Through walkthroughs of *Maria Helena Vieira da Silva: Anatomy of Space* and *Manu-Facture: The Ceramics of Lucio Fontana*, they shared the stories and ideas behind the exhibitions the fellows would later present to visitors.

CROSS-DEPARTMENTAL COLLABORATION

Fellows regularly supported departments across the museum, contributing to a wide range of projects and events.

With the Events department, fellows supported temporary exhibition openings and press conferences, while office collaborations offered a glimpse into event planning and administration. They also assisted with a range of institutional activities, including programming for the Advisory Board. Collaborations with the Communications and Curatorial departments included researching artworks and preparing scripts for social media Art Talks, while involvement with the Individual Development and Membership department gave some fellows the opportunity to photograph the institutional openings for temporary exhibitions.

Public programs offered the chance to engage directly with artists and curators. *Marina Apollonio: Never Endings*, curated by Enrico Bettinello and Guglielmo Bottin, brought performances and live music into the galleries, while the interdisciplinary evening *Avvenimento #3 Nos Bastidores do Estudo* saw fellows assist artist Luca Gerry Conte's performance *Solve at Coagula*. Fellows also enjoyed *New Echo System*, presented in collaboration with Pro Helvetia Venezia, which hosted an evocative live music set by Swiss musician Leoni Leoni.

EDUCATION, PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, AND INCLUSION

Throughout the year, fellows joined the **Education Department** in a wide range of activities for visitors of all ages and backgrounds.

A weekly highlight was ***Kids Day***, the museum's Sunday workshop for children aged 4–10. Fellows devised and delivered creative activities inspired by the collection, with special editions including a Venice Glass Week workshop based on Claire Falkenstein's iconic entrance gate and an English-language Kids Day where children stepped into the role of curators, creating their own miniature gallery booklets.

The museum's educational work extended across generations. ***Art to Share*** welcomed corporate members and their families for tours and hands-on activities, while ***A Scuola di Guggenheim*** brought fellows into conversation with school groups from across the Veneto region. The annual **EDU Open Day** introduced teachers and educators to the museum's upcoming programs, and ***Estate a Palazzo*** invited visitors aged over 75 to explore the collection through conversation and creative activities.

Inclusive museum practice formed another important part of the program. Fellows took part in ***Io Vado al Museo***, welcoming participants with migratory backgrounds, and ***Doppio Senso***, where blind and partially sighted visitors experienced artworks through touch and multisensory exploration.

EXPLORING BEYOND THE LAGOON: TRIPS, VISITS, AND CULTURAL IMMERSION

A highlight of the program is the opportunity to explore Italy through monthly trips and cultural visits. From modern and contemporary art museums to historic sites and artist studios, these excursions offer the chance to discover exhibitions, meet museum professionals, and experience the country's cultural landscape first-hand.

In 2025, fellows travelled across northern and central Italy, visiting Ferrara, Ravenna, Florence, Padua, Bologna, Trento, Milan, and beyond. Closer to home, monthly outings explored Venice's cultural treasures, from the Byzantine mosaics of Torcello to Le Stanze della Fotografia, Fondazione Querini Stampalia, and the newly opened Palazzo Diedo – Berggruen Arts & Culture.

Highlights included:

- A visit to **Palazzo Strozzi** in Florence for *Tracey Emin. Sex and Solitude*, accompanied by a presentation from the Education Department on the museum's public programs and approaches to engaging with sensitive themes.
- A behind-the-scenes visit to the **Fondazione Arnaldo Pomodoro**, where fellows explored the archive, toured the artist's studio, and uncovered the story of *Sphere No. 3* (1964), from the Peggy Guggenheim Collection.
- An invitation to **Collezione Maramotti** in Reggio Emilia, where the group previewed *Black Mirror* by Roméo Mivekannin, interviewed the artist, and attended the exhibition opening.
- A guided tour of **Palazzo Maffei Casa Museo** in Verona led by the museum's Vice Director and former international fellow.

Exploring the **Biennale Architettura 2025** through guided tours at the U.S. Pavilion and British Pavilion, followed by an evening at ***Cinema Galleggiante – Acque Sconosciute***, where the Peggy Guggenheim Collection presented a screening of *Nosferatu* (1922).

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Through these personal reflections, participants share some of the moments that shaped their time as part of the International Fellowship Program.

RICARDO DOMINGOS RODRIGUES DE SOUSA

Germany and Portugal (March-May)

I arrived in Venice a couple of days before the Fellowship Program began. On that first day, the *vaporetti* (water boats) were on strike and I had to lug two suitcases from one end of the Giudecca to the other. Walking towards my new home, two thoughts crossed my mind: *Wow, I really moved to Venice* and *what exactly am I doing here?*

Those feelings quickly faded when I found myself waiting outside the museum with the other fellows, all of us quietly wondering what the next few months had in store.

And what months they turned out to be! From day trips and laughs in the museum, to cappuccinos in the café and *aperitivi* after work, every week brought something new. My personal highlights were cultural mediation and *A Scuola di Guggenheim*, where I spoke with visitors from around the world and introduced school groups to modern art. I also travelled to Collezione Maramotti, where we explored Vivian Sassen's exhibition and met the artist herself, and discovered *Maria Helena Vieira da Silva: Anatomy of Space*, a particularly special moment for me as a Portuguese fellow.

Looking back, what stands out most is the people. You arrive as strangers and leave with friends scattered across the globe. As Peggy Guggenheim herself once said: "To live in Venice or even to visit it means that you fall in love with the city itself." I certainly did.

THOMAS GODFREY

United Kingdom (August–September)

A dear friend of Peggy Guggenheim and frequent guest at Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, Truman Capote once wrote that visiting Venice is "like eating an entire box of chocolate liqueurs in one go." Arriving a week before my fellowship began, I immediately understood what he meant. What I could never have imagined, however, was just how much I would lose my heart to the city, the people, and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection.

In just two months, I made friends from every corner of the globe, discovered that I could speak more languages than I thought, and learned more about art

history than I ever expected through daily encounters with visitors, colleagues, and the artworks themselves. I took part in *Kids Days*, contributed to *Avvenimento #3*, celebrated Peggy Guggenheim's birthday, and shared countless memorable moments with fellow participants.

Yet what I cherished above everything else was becoming part of the Guggenheim family. Back in Cambridge – still too far from Venice for my liking, though nearer than some friends who have returned to Mexico City, Charleston, Shanghai, and beyond – people often ask, *what was the best part?* My answer is always the same: the people I met, my fellow "Guggies".

Hemingway called Paris a "moveable feast", but anyone who has taken part in this program knows that Venice—and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection—deserves that title too. Once a Guggie, always a Guggie.

EDEN PORTER

United States (June-July)

A true joy of the International Fellowship Program was engaging in Education Department initiatives that shared the common goal of making art more accessible. Here, I felt a real calling.

Beyond giving regularly scheduled talks, I took part in the *Ask Me About the Art* initiative, using cultural mediation to connect with visitors who might not always feel at home in a museum. Armed with the knowledge I had acquired about the collection—and my warmest smile—I chatted with people from all walks of life: a New York high school teacher, a young German playwright, a Colombian history buff, a Japanese family on holiday, and Italian school students. Listening to their perspectives, I often felt that I learned as much from them as they did from me.

Kids Day gave me the chance to bring the collection to life for younger visitors by helping develop tours and creative workshops inspired by the artworks. I was also fortunate to support *Io Vado al Museo*, welcoming participants with migratory backgrounds and learning first-hand about the museum's inclusive approach to education.

Through these experiences, I discovered a passion for making art more accessible. The Peggy Guggenheim Collection not only affirmed that passion, but gave me the confidence to keep exploring new ways of connecting people with art.

REFLECTIONS: DEPARTMENT BY DEPARTMENT

Get a glimpse into the experiences of those who completed extended departmental placements at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in 2025.

AGATA GAGLIANO

Curatorial Department

I am extremely grateful to have been granted the opportunity to support the Curatorial Department for six months. Participating in this institution's mission was a dream come true, as well as my first experience in a curatorial role.

In January, just one week after my first day at the Collection, I participated in the reinstallation of the permanent collection. This was my introduction to the Fellowship and an interesting way of starting from the back: the very last step in the exhibition-making process, before its presentation to the public, was the very first one I assisted with.

Later, Curator Gražina Subelytė and Curatorial Assistant Ambra D'Antone entrusted me with a variety of tasks. With the support of the Museum's Library and Archives, I conducted specialist research for upcoming exhibitions, assisted with provenance research and compiled bibliographies of artworks in the collection.

I participated in meetings with guest curators and the Registrar team and supported the development of layouts for upcoming exhibitions. Contributing to the development of multiple projects was extremely rewarding. I hope to repeat this experience many times in the future as I embark on my career as a curator.

ALESSIA VENDRAMINELLI

Finance and Administration Departments

After previous experience in the role of Registrar, I became curious to understand how exhibitions and museum activities are supported from a financial and administrative perspective.

Wanting to gain a broader understanding of how a museum works, I saw the opportunity in the Finance and Administration Department as the ideal chance to explore this different, yet equally essential, side of the institution.

It is often easy to overlook the fact that every activity, project, or initiative at the museum must first be evaluated and supported from a financial perspective. In a sense, every department's work intersects with this office at some point.

Supporting this department allowed me to better understand how the museum

functions as a whole and how different teams collaborate toward shared goals.

Beyond its professional and educational value, this placement was also deeply enriching on a personal level. Through the activities, events, and trips organized as part of the International Fellowship Program, I me people from many different backgrounds, building friendships and connections that extended far beyond the museum.

These relationships became one of the highlights of the experience, adding a meaningful personal dimension to an already valuable professional journey.

AURORA DI IUSTO

Individual Development and Membership Department

After my initial experience at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection as a participant in the International Fellowship Program, I developed a strong desire to contribute more actively to the departments that operate behind the scenes of a museum each day and had the opportunity to join the Membership and Individual Development Department through a departmental placement.

Just as Peggy Guggenheim cared for her distinguished guests at Palazzo Venier dei Leoni, this department is dedicated to every aspect of caring for the museum's members: from the very first welcome to keeping them informed about new developments, as well as organizing events, private visits, and travel programs tailored specifically for them.

Having the opportunity to support both back-office and front-office activities was an invaluable experience, enabling me to grow from multiple perspectives. Thanks to the daily use of specialized platforms and databases, as well as the guidance of an exceptional team, I gained a solid technical foundation. Equally important, being actively involved in a wide range of activities within a collaborative, cross-departmental environment and in contact with diverse audiences was essential in consolidating my skills and deepening my awareness on both a professional and personal level.

MARTINA DESTINO

Individual Development and Membership Department

My placement in the Membership and Individual Development Department allowed me to apply the knowledge and skills acquired during my Arts Management degree while gaining hands-on experience within one of the most prestigious and internationally renowned contemporary museums.

Throughout my time in the office, I was able to learn the dynamics of working within a major cultural institution. In particular, I was involved in a wide range of fundraising and development activities, spanning from database management, research tasks and administrative responsibilities to more creative and public-facing roles. These included supporting membership events and activities, assisting with communications, and contributing to the planning and implementation of member programming. This experience allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding

of the many components involved in managing a successful membership program, from donor relations and engagement strategies to operational and administrative processes. Thanks to this opportunity I was able to extend my time at the museum. Building on the foundations established during those six months, I was able to continue developing my professional skills and begin building a career in the art sector.

MARIA AFANASEVA

Communications Department

There is a particular kind of learning that only happens when someone trusts you with real responsibilities—and that is what the Peggy Guggenheim Collection gave me.

I had the privilege of being part of the Communications team during some of the museum's biggest moments: a permanent collection rehang, a major exhibition opening, and Biennale week.

Alongside this, I collaborated with the Conservation Department, bringing visibility to their activities for the museum's partners. I also suggested my own idea that took flight: series of one-on-one interviews with staff from six departments about life inside the museum. I even managed to help create viral content—not on the first attempt, but that failure was part of the learning process!

What made this possible was the culture of the Communications Department. Arianna Ferraretto and Maria Rita Cerilli allowed me autonomy while remaining present as mentors. They were also deeply human, making the stress of a new city and new environment quietly disappear. That same kindness, dedication, and inspiration extended to every person I encountered, making the museum feel, as one colleague put it, like a small world at Dorsoduro 701.

Being within these walls, surrounded by a collection that is itself an act of visionary belief in art, raised the stakes of every task. I came to learn, but I also came to contribute—and I hope I did both.

I am deeply grateful to the Guggenheim community for this trust