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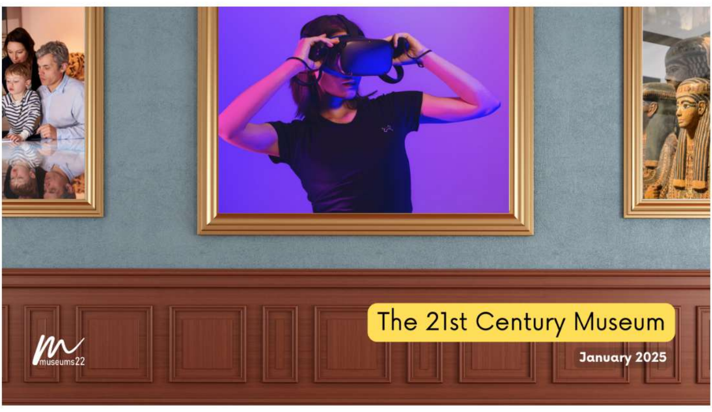

4 Museum Trends to Watch Out For In 2025

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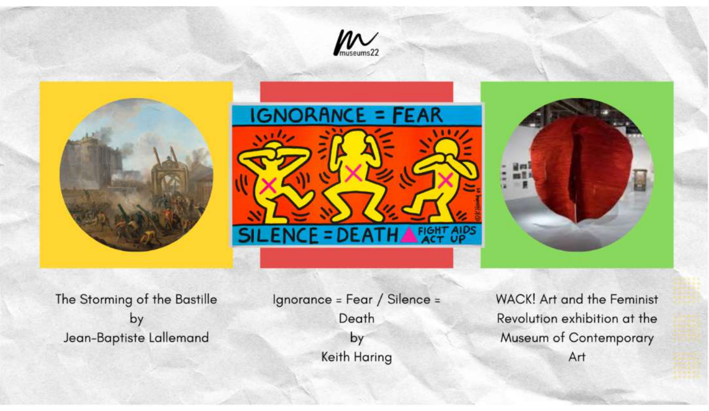
Art is an imitation of life.

It's why Jean-Baptiste Lallemand captured the fervor of 1789 in The Storming of the Bastille during the French Revolution.

It's why Keith Haring's Ignorance = Fear / Silence = Death became a defining image of 1980s AIDS activism.

And why the groundbreaking WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution exhibition launched at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles in 2007.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IGNORANCE = FEAR
SILENCE = DEATH
FIGHT AIDS ACT UP
The Storming of the Bastille by Jean-Baptiste Lallemand
Ignorance = Fear / Silence = Death by Keith Haring
WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art

A collage of history's most iconic art pieces

These paintings and exhibitions are a reflection of the pressing issue of the times—the protests, movements, and revolutions that shaped the world we live in today.

Now, with 2024 in the rearview mirror, a new year brings new energy to the museum world. Some long-awaited reopenings are finally here, and fresh technologies are promising to reshape how we experience culture.

To catch you up on what's ahead, we've put together the top museum trends to watch in 2025. Let's jump in!

Trend 1 - Immersive Experiences

It would be unfair to claim that the trends set to dominate museums in 2025 didn't see the light in 2024. Much like life, art builds on its past, and one trend continuing to captivate audiences is the rise of multisensory museum experiences.

Take the Van Gogh Immersive Experience, which toured the globe in 2024, enchanting audiences from the United States to Asia and Europe. At just a few bucks a ticket, visitors stepped into a 360-degree projection of Van Gogh's masterpieces—a glimpse into the mind of a tortured genius.

ST
Van Gogh's art comes to life at immersive digital exhibition at Re
The Straits Times
INSIDE VAN GOGH: THE IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE
ST
Watch on YouTube

Even those unfamiliar with his work left with a deeper appreciation for his unconventional art style and storytelling.

As The Guardian described, *"This is where the daring of the exhibition hits you. In a conventional telling, Van Gogh's life in Provence was brutally split, as his first ecstatic months ended in self-harm and hospitalisation. Here, the translation to Saint-Rémy is not a tragedy at all…a later room is filled with landscapes he painted around Saint-Rémy that teeter on total abstraction. In The Olive Trees, the earth erupts in waves like the sea, trees dance, and a cartoon cloud is so free from rules it could be by Picasso."*

The immersive art trend isn't slowing down in 2025. These experiences draw visitors into the minds of artists, sparking conversations that traditional museums often miss.

While a lot of museums are taking a bet on this technology, we recommend looking forward to:

📌 **The Edelman Fossil Park & Museum** will open in March 2025, bringing prehistoric life to the present. Located at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey—an area rich in paleontological history—it promises a fully immersive experience. Highlights include:

- Fossil digging and VR exhibits
- Interactive fossil hunts powered by RFID technology
- Immersive showcases of dinosaurs and ancient species
- Sustainability-focused design with geothermal and electric systems reducing its carbon footprint

Trend 2 - Decarbonization

It's inspiring when one museum initiative empowers another. While immersive experiences captivate audiences, museums are also stepping up to address the pressing issue of climate change.

A report titled TrendsWatch: Navigating a Volatile Future by The Center for the Future of Museums, part of the American Alliance of Museums, highlights that 2025 will see a stronger focus on global warming's many challenges. The report's title alone, with its ominous "volatile future," serves as a wake-up call.

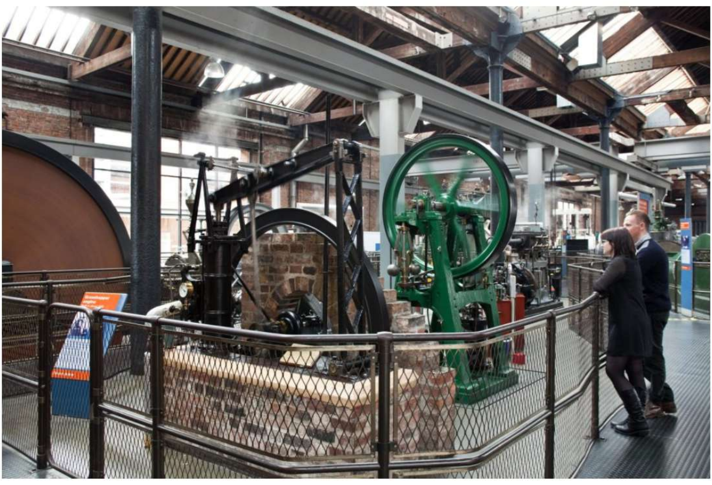
In the report, Elizabeth Merritt, Founding Director of the Center for the Future of Museums, outlines the direct risks climate change poses to museums:

- Over one-third of museums are within 100 kilometers of coastlines, putting them at immediate risk of rising sea levels
- 16% of Americans, along with the museums serving them, reside in high-risk wildfire zones
- HVAC systems are struggling to keep up with extreme weather and natural disasters
- Botanical gardens and biological collections face significant threats
- Outside events and rentals, key revenue sources, are declining
- Insurance costs are increasing, with some museums losing coverage entirely
- Archaeological sites are at risk of being lost forever

To mitigate these challenges, the report advises museums to measure and report carbon emissions, set tangible carbon reduction goals, adopt climate-friendly policies like remote work, and reassess funding sources tied to industries fueling the crisis.

📌 If you're passionate about supporting such initiatives, consider visiting **Power Hall in Manchester**.

Home to the UK's largest collection of working steam trains—many built in Manchester—this beloved industrial heritage museum has been undergoing restoration since 2019 and is set to reopen this summer. Along with urgent infrastructure upgrades, it features a groundbreaking decarbonization project aimed at significantly reducing carbon emissions.



via

Trend 3 - Augmented Reality

It's no surprise that augmented reality (AR) has claimed its place on this list. It was already such a big success in 2024 with Museums22's team releasing its first AR experiences within Mumbai International Airport's museum—ArtBeat India.

ArtBeat India 🤝 Museums22

Formerly the Jaya He Museum, ArtBeat India is located in the transit area of Mumbai's bustling CSM International Airport—one of the 50 busiest airports in the world.

Museums22 developed an audio guide app with QR codes on each artwork, allowing passengers to explore India's heritage effortlessly without downloading apps. In 2024, gamification features like quizzes and challenges transformed the app into an engaging experience, turning wait times into cultural exploration.

The recent addition of AR technology, however, takes the experience to a whole new level. AR doesn't just overlay information on the physical world—it enhances understanding by annotating scenes, contextualizing history, and highlighting contrasts with present realities.

Unlike VR, which requires specialized gear like headsets and controllers, AR is accessible through everyday devices like smartphones and tablets, making it more inclusive and convenient for museum-goers.

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Trend 4 - Virtual Reality

AR might be easier to implement than VR, but the museum world is absolutely devouring virtual reality.

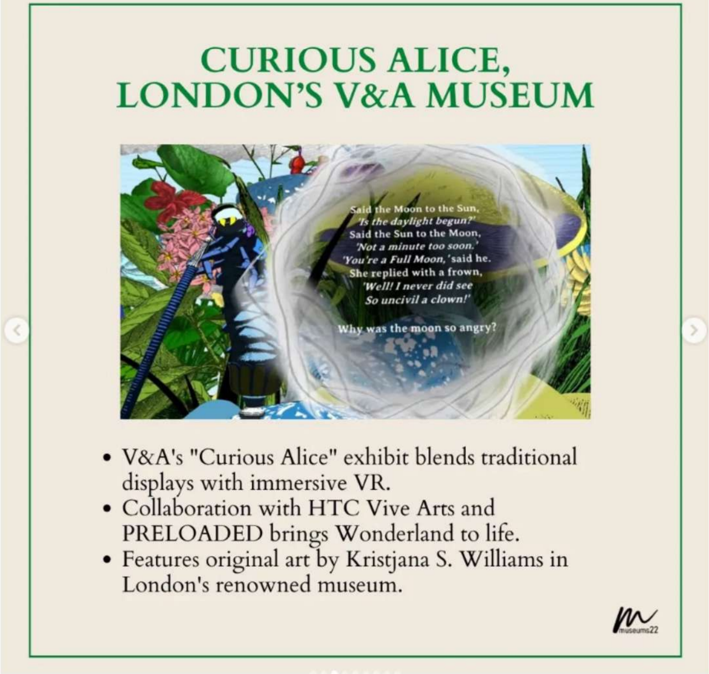
Research from the University of Glasgow, conducted as part of the £5.6 million Museums in the Metaverse (MiM) project, highlights how VR can revolutionize digital access to museum collections.

With insights from over 2,000 participants worldwide, the study revealed that an estimated 90% of museum collections currently in storage could be brought to life through virtual heritage experiences.

Key findings from the Museums in the Metaverse Audiences and Impacts Report include:

- 55% of respondents reported having both awareness of and engagement with VR technology, while 96% were at least aware of it
- 38% expressed a willingness to pay for virtual cultural heritage experiences, while 51% were open to being compensated for creating such content

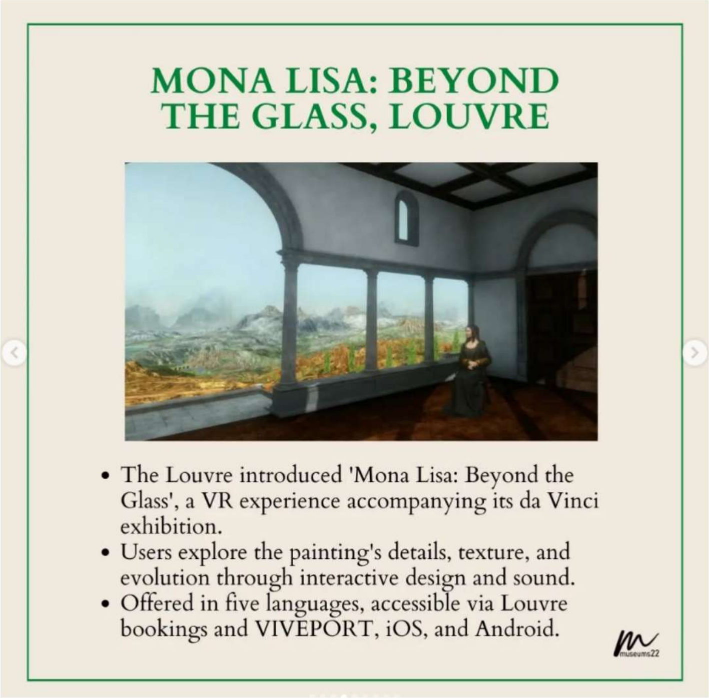
For those eager to dive into VR, here are some of the most popular virtual museums from 2024:



Said the Moon to the Sun,
'Is the daylight begun?'
Said the Sun to the Moon,
'Not a minute too soon.'
'You're a Full Moon,' said he.
She replied with a frown,
'Well! I never did see
So uncivil a clown!'
Why was the moon so angry?
museums22

CURIOUS ALICE, LONDON'S V&A MUSEUM

- V&A's "Curious Alice" exhibit blends traditional displays with immersive VR.
- Collaboration with HTC Vive Arts and PRELOADED brings Wonderland to life.
- Features original art by Kristjana S. Williams in London's renowned museum.



MONA LISA: BEYOND THE GLASS, LOUVRE

- The Louvre introduced 'Mona Lisa: Beyond the Glass', a VR experience accompanying its da Vinci exhibition.
- Users explore the painting's details, texture, and evolution through interactive design and sound.
- Offered in five languages, accessible via Louvre bookings and VIVEPORT, iOS, and Android.

Artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and blockchain technology are already reshaping how we think about authorship, ownership, and the audience's relationship to the artwork. Yet I suspect that in 2025, the most compelling technological art will be that which critiques, rather than glorifies, our digital lives.

-Aindrea Emelife, Curator at Museum of West African Art (MOWAA), Lagos and London

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The world is changing this year, and so are museums. To keep up with the changes in visitor preferences, socialization patterns, and genius technological developments across museums—follow our newsletter!

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