The Obama Portraits

A social narrative for first-time visitors, families, and visitors with developmental disabilities
Where to Enter

_The Obama Portraits_ exhibition is located in Galleries 182-184, in the museum’s Modern Wing.

Seeing _The Obama Portraits_ does not require a separate ticket. From the museum’s lobby we will use a QR code to sign up for a spot in a virtual line. We will be able to enter the exhibition when our turn comes up in the virtual line. Because a lot of other people will also want to see the portraits, we will only spend about 5 to 8 minutes in the portrait gallery. It’s possible that on some days, not everyone who wants to see the portraits will be able to see them.
This oil painting is over seven feet tall and nearly five feet wide. At its center, Barack Obama sits in a carved wooden chair, looking straight at the viewer. A lush backdrop of green leaves partially covers his chair and stretches to all edges of the canvas. Orange, pink, white, and purple flowers dot the scene.

President Obama wears an all-black suit, black shoes, and a white collared shirt. The top buttons of his shirt are unbuttoned. He sits with his feet firmly planted, knees wide apart and arms folded, elbows resting on his knees. The skin of his face and hands is painted in golden-brown hues, and his black hair is tinged with gray. He gazes straight ahead with an expression that is calm, confident, and engaged.
The oil painting is roughly six feet tall and five feet wide. Michelle Obama, the former First Lady of the United States, is seated against a solid, pale-blue background. She is centered on the canvas and wears a sleeveless black and white dress with colored accents in a geometric print. The flowing skirt of her dress expands in a triangular shape that extends down to the bottom edge of the canvas. Black and gray triangles and semicircles are distributed across the white base of the fabric, accented by stripes of red, pink, and yellow.

Michelle Obama’s skin is rendered in shades of gray. Her expression is focused. She gazes out, making eye contact with the viewer. Her hair, parted in the middle, falls in large, soft waves just past her bare shoulders. Her arms are bent, with one forearm resting on her knee and her other hand tucked under her chin.

## Accessibility

The Art Institute of Chicago welcomes all visitors and is committed to making programs and services accessible to everyone.

There are a range of resources available that have been designed specifically for adults and children with disabilities, including a map of sensory-friendly spaces in the museum. You can visit [artic.edu/access](http://artic.edu/access) to learn more.

The Obama Portraits Tour is organized by the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC. Support for the national tour is generously provided by Bank of America.