

Crain's

NYC Health + Hospitals to Open Access to its Art on Popular Digital App

By: Cara Eisenpress

More than 3,000 works of art in NYC Health + Hospitals' Arts in Medicine program are scheduled to be available to the public—some for the first time—beginning Friday, as the agency becomes the first health institution on a growing list of cultural organizations that have launched guides on a single phone app meant to broaden access to art and education around the world.

The app, Bloomberg Connects, is free to cultural organizations and to visitors. Leading museums in New York City, including the Frick Collection and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, are participating. The goal is to create a user-friendly digital guide with audio tours and other features that people in the art world are likely to embrace.

H+H said its guide will allow app users to navigate much of its 4,000-item collection, the largest public art collection in the city. Nearly 100 hospitals, nursing homes and primary care sites display items from the collection, whose main goal is to engage patients and their families while they seek medical care, H+H said.

"Many people do not realize the breadth and depth of the collection, dating back to the 19th century," said Larissa Trinder, senior director of the Arts in Medicine department. "Bloomberg Connects will open access to our collection for thousands of people around the world."

The ability to share art with audiences outside the walls of a cultural institution became central to the survival of many museums during Covid-19 pandemic closures. The desire for open access has stuck around.

"Both organizations and patrons have come to appreciate the opportunity to have rewarding cultural experiences regardless of location," said Kate Levin, who oversees the Bloomberg Philanthropies arts program including the app.