

# Press Release



April 2016

## **ASK Brooklyn Museum App Connecting Visitors with Museum Experts for a Personalized Experience is Now Available on Android and iPhone**

*ASK sets a new standard for museum visitor engagement by allowing users to interact in real time with museum experts and is supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies' program aimed to open access to the arts.*

This April, the Brooklyn Museum launches the Android version of its ASK Brooklyn Museum app, which enables visitors to interact in real time with Museum experts. The app sets a new standard in museum visitor engagement by leveraging technology to encourage dialogue between visitors and the Museum's Audience Engagement staff, a dedicated team of experienced art historians, researchers, and educators. The app is funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies through its Bloomberg Connects program, a global initiative that helps cultural institutions innovate and engage audiences through digital platforms.

Free to download on both iPhones and Androids, the app enables visitors to pose questions about any work of art on view at the Museum and receive answers from the Audience Engagement Team in real time, providing a tailored, on-site educational experience. ASK is designed based on the look of Apple's iMessage to offer a simple and familiar communications interface that is both kid- and adult-friendly. Using location-aware technology, the ASK app locates users in relation to works of art on view, which then enables the experts to better answer questions and recommend other objects of interest.

"We have the opportunity to really learn what works of art interest our visitors, what kinds of questions they are asking, and the observations they are making in a more comprehensive way than ever before. The data collected has helped inform some of the decisions our curators have made in our newly installed galleries and will assist in the way we present work in the future," says Anne Pasternak, Shelby White and Leon Levy Director of the Museum.

### **Brooklyn Museum**

200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11238-6052  
T(718) 638-5000 F(718) 501-6134  
[www.brooklynmuseum.org](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org)

The project is spearheaded by Shelley Bernstein, Vice Director of Digital Engagement and Technology, and Sara Devine, Manager of Audience Engagement and Interpretive Materials. "ASK uses a very simple mechanism of asking a question and leveraging engagement, so we can learn more about how visitors are experiencing the Museum. This is helping our curators see what's working and where we could be making refinements for better clarity," explained Bernstein.

### **American, Egyptian, and European galleries reopening**

Following a year of pilot-testing and the spring 2015 release of the iOS version of ASK, the launch of ASK's Android version comes at a time of important change at the Museum.

Alongside the app launch, the Museum's refreshed American, Egyptian, and European galleries reopen to the public on April 21 after a dedicated reinstallation focused on showcasing the Museum collections with dynamic new themes. In preparation for the reinstallations, the Museum collected feedback from conversations on the ASK iOS platform. Those preliminary insights were shared with the curatorial team, helping to inform decisions about collection installations and exhibition design. Some of this direct visitor feedback is reflected in the layout and presentation of the galleries.

The data from ASK has already yielded invaluable results. "On average, users send 13 messages within a single conversation, and 20% of the users asked questions in six galleries or more. Early adopters of the iOS version of the ASK app have initiated close to 4,000 conversations over the last year resulting in more than 2,800 individual questions being categorized with corresponding object identification," said Bernstein. "Visitor driven conversation is working to deliver a better visitor experience overall and will continue to in the years to come."

"New technology gives museums the ability to connect with audiences in exciting new ways," said Michael R. Bloomberg, philanthropist and three-term Mayor of New York City. "The ASK Brooklyn Museum app will be a great way to help visitors immerse themselves in the Museum's world class collections."

ASK Brooklyn Museum is now available on all Android and iOS devices, and can be downloaded free from the iTunes App Store and Google Play. Download at <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/ask>.

### **Press Contacts:**

Meg Blackburn, FITZ & CO, 212.620.7390, [mblackburn@fitzandco.com](mailto:mblackburn@fitzandco.com)

Taylor Maatman, FITZ & CO, 646.569.0926, [tmaatman@fitzandco.com](mailto:tmaatman@fitzandco.com)

Fatima Jones Kafele, Brooklyn Museum, 718.501.6331, [fatima.kafele@brooklynmuseum.org](mailto:fatima.kafele@brooklynmuseum.org)

## **Brooklyn Museum**

200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11238-6052

T(718) 638-5000 F(718) 501-6134

[www.brooklynmuseum.org](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org)