



THE BARNES FOUNDATION

Background Information

Henri Rousseau: A Painter's Secrets

October 19, 2025–February 22, 2026



Henri Rousseau. *Scouts Attacked by a Tiger* (detail), 1904. The Barnes Foundation, BF584

SEE THE INVENTIVE WORKS OF HENRI ROUSSEAU IN A NEW LIGHT.

In fall 2025, the Barnes—home to the world's largest collection of works by the self-taught artist Henri Rousseau—will present *Henri Rousseau: A Painter's Secrets* in the Roberts Gallery. This landmark exhibition brings together important paintings from collections around the world, showing how Rousseau painted with viewers in mind, changing his works and his story to suit their preferences.

Building on a comprehensive research study of the 18 works by Rousseau at the Barnes, the exhibition was developed in partnership with the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris, which houses the collection of the art dealer Paul Guillaume. Guillaume sold many Rousseau paintings to Dr. Albert Barnes but kept others for himself—this exhibition reunites these works for the first time in more than a hundred years.

About the Artist

[BARNESFOUNDATION.ORG/SCHOOL-PROGRAMS](https://www.barnesfoundation.org/school-programs)

Henri Rousseau (1844–1910) was a French post-impressionist painter. He is also known as Le Douanier (the customs officer) after his place of employment. Though ridiculed by critics during his lifetime, Rousseau is now recognized as a self-taught genius whose works are of high artistic quality.

Rousseau was born in northwestern France into the family of a tinsmith. He attended high school first as a day student and then as a boarder, after his family lost their house. He was mediocre in some subjects but won prizes for drawing and music. After graduating, he worked for a lawyer and served in the French army for four years. He began working as a toll collector in 1868 and began exhibiting artwork in 1886.

henrirousseau.org/biography.html

Field Trips

In 75-minute guided tours (45–60 minutes for pre-K & K), students will be divided into groups to see approximately **three** galleries in the Barnes collection. Each gallery wall presents artworks in symmetrical arrangements called *ensembles*, which feature European and American paintings, African sculptures, Navajo textiles and jewelry, Pueblo pottery, metalwork, furniture, and more. Students will also see **two** areas in the special exhibition in the Roberts Gallery. These guided experiences focus on slow looking and art exercises aimed at helping students find relevance in art, validating their opinions, enhancing art vocabulary, and inspiring their creative voice. As such, students will not see all the artworks in the collection or special exhibition during one visit.

Guided tours take place Monday through Wednesday at 10 & 11:45 am. Sixty students maximum per field trip will be divided into groups of 15 or fewer with 1 or 2 chaperones per group. Field trips are **free** for public and charter schools in the School Districts of Philadelphia and Camden and all Catholic schools in the Delaware Valley. These schools also qualify for free transportation. Visits for all other school groups are \$5 per person.

Due to the limited availability of guided experiences, we encourage students in grades 8 and above to self-guide with their chaperones using our resources like the free mobile guide Barnes Focus. Self-guiding offers more scheduling flexibility and may take place during the Barnes's open hours, pending availability. Self-guided visits (\$5 per person; free for qualifying schools above) are essentially general admission tickets, and groups may need to wait in line with other visitors to enter galleries and special exhibition spaces.

Plan Your Visit

Learn more and complete the request form at barnesfoundation.org/school-programs. A Barnes staff member will respond by email to confirm and schedule your visit. If applicable, full payment, by check or credit card, is required at least two weeks before your visit. Payments are final and non-refundable.

Free busing is offered to School District of Philadelphia and Catholic schools in the Delaware Valley, see above. Teachers are responsible for booking, confirming, canceling, and making changes to their transportation: First choice: Philly Transportation (email sharon@phillytrans.us or call 215.842.1222 x 221); second choice: Sague Bus Company (email saguebus@comcast.net or call 215.289.1022); ask to book into the times reserved for Barnes Foundation school programs. Invoices from other bus companies or other schools will not be accepted. Reserve ASAP; free buses are subject to availability.

Plan to arrive 15 minutes prior to your scheduled start time. The designated bus drop-off is located on Pennsylvania Avenue, between 20th and 21st Streets; navigate to 2024 Pennsylvania Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19130. Groups cannot stay in the building after their scheduled tour time, eat lunch at the Barnes, or self-tour without prior authorization. Be mindful that educators are scheduled specifically for you and respect their time by properly planning for transportation and chaperones.

Group Size & Chaperones

Guided and self-guided tours are available for groups of 10 to 60 students. School groups over 60 will be asked to schedule more than one visit. Large groups will be asked to split into smaller groups of 15 students or fewer with 1 or 2 chaperones per group.

We require one adult chaperone for every 10 students in pre-K and kindergarten groups, and one adult for every 15 students in first grade and older. We can accommodate a maximum of two adults per 15 students for grades 1–12, and two adults per ten students for pre-K and kindergarten. Chaperones must stay with students at all times during both guided and self-guided visits.

Teacher Resources

Teachers may self-tour the special exhibition ahead of their field trip. Email education@barnesfoundation.org to arrange a complimentary visit during open hours. We have created classroom resources for this exhibition, which can be found at barnesfoundation.org/school-programs/teacher-resources. Learn more about the exhibition at barnesfoundation.org/whats-on/exhibitions/henri-rousseau-a-painters-secrets.

Read and share the important information in our [school group visit guide](#) with your students and chaperones. View our [other resources online](#), including a class presentation to prepare your students, an orientation video, scavenger hunts, and a link to an informative HBO documentary about the Barnes.

Check out our new [virtual learning videos](#), recorded in our galleries using our state-of-the-art learning platform that brings you closer to the artwork than ever before. The videos are free to access and can be used to support in-class lessons or at-home learning. Check back often as this library of videos will continue to grow!

Contact us

Please don't hesitate email education@barnesfoundation.org or call 215.278.7300 with any questions.

Space for guided tours of this special exhibition is extremely limited. Request your visit now by scanning the code below or visiting barnesfoundation.org/school-programs.

