Situated in the University of Washington's Art Building, the Jacob Lawrence Gallery is a vital center for social engagement and critical dialogue about the roles of art, art history, and design within the broader context of intellectual life on campus. Through an ambitious and compelling program of contemporary exhibitions, lectures, performances, screenings, and discussions, the Gallery is a site of knowledge production and advancing discourses that serves over 8,000 visitors each year.

In 1994, the Gallery was dedicated to one of the School's most renowned faculty members, Jacob Lawrence, who taught at the University of Washington from 1970–1985 and served as Professor Emeritus until the end of his life in 2000. The Gallery is a tangible, living legacy of Lawrence's exemplary life and practice.

Of the twelve exhibitions presented each year, eight are student exhibitions. In addition to these exhibition opportunities, the Gallery hosts an internship program where students learn curatorial methodologies, exhibition design and production, and act as docents for the exhibitions on view.

In 2018, the Gallery became a W.A.G.E. Certified Institution in recognition of its ongoing commitment to equitable compensation for artists and writers.