Inspiration

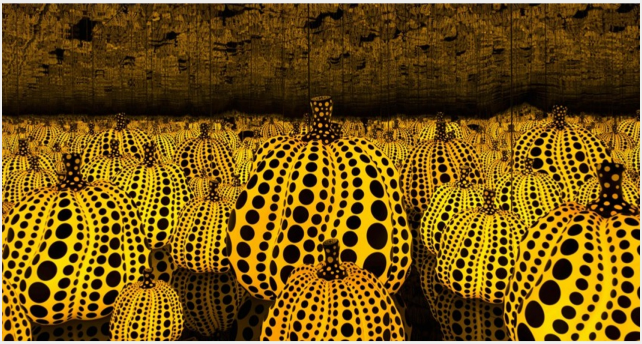
By: Andrea González

Western inspiration is in the Dallas Arts District

With venues like the AT&T Performing Arts Center, a complex designed by Norman Foster's studio, the Museum of Art, the Nasher Sculpture Center, which houses one of the world's finest collections of contemporary sculpture, and the Perot Museum of Nature and Science, where you can experience an earthquake or touch a tornado, the Dallas Arts District stretches across more than twenty blocks. We'll show you how to enjoy a Broadway musical, visit an outdoor Miró, or discover avant-garde art—all in the heart of Texas.

The idea for the Dallas Art District emerged in the 1970s, when the Texas city authorities hired several external auditors. The goal? To find the perfect location for all its art institutions. By consensus, northeast of downtown Dallas was chosen as the best location, a land that was the ancestral home of Native American peoples such as the Caddo, Wichita, Tawakoni, and Kiikapoi, as well as nomadic communities such as the Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache. In the Dallas Art District, today a multicultural space, Native American heritage, along with African-American and Latino influences, are recognized as an indispensable part of Texas history.

All this heritage was captured in the district's first major museum. The Dallas Museum of Art , designed by Edward Larabee Barnes, opened in 1984, turning its 150,000 square feet into a home for more than 24,000 pieces from Africa, the Americas, Europe, and Asia, dating from 3000 BC to the present day. The museum features works by Van Gogh, Renoir, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Claude Monet, part of the permanent collection, and until January 2026, Yayoi Kusama's installation, ***All the Eternal Love I Have for the Pumpkins*** , one of the artist's most famous.



All the Eternal Love I Have for the Pumpkins, 2016. Yayoi Kusama. Courtesy of the Dallas Museum of Art

Since the opening of this first museum, the district has grown to become the area with the largest number of buildings designed by Pritzker Prize winners in the world. Another important institution is the Museum of

Art at the Nasher Sculpture Center , born from the vision of Raymond and Patsy Nasher, collectors of modern sculpture who, in the late 1990s, commissioned the award-winning Renzo Piano—in collaboration with landscape architect Peter Walker—to design it. Opened in 2003, the center inaugurated a new urban narrative that was consolidated by the subsequent development of the Winspear Opera House, the Wyly Theatre, Annette Strauss Square, Sammons Park, and other public spaces dedicated to art that we will visit later. The Nasher Sculpture Center is an oasis in the middle of the asphalt, with a 6,200 square meter public garden, which serves as an open-air museum with works by Miró and Picasso and which will offer an open-air concert every Friday in the summer , and 5,000 square meters of indoor exhibition space. Its collection includes works by Rodin, Giacometti, Judy Chicago, and Max Ernst, among many other sculptural giants, and regular exhibitions showcase the museum's new acquisitions. Since 2020, the Nasher Sculpture Center has awarded an annual prize recognizing contemporary artists, this year honoring the Nigerian multidisciplinary artist Otobong Nkang .

Mark di Suvero "Eviva Amore." Courtesy of the Nasher Sculpture Center

The backbone of the entire Dallas Art District, however, is the AT&T Performing Arts Center , a 40,000-square-meter venue that encompasses four institutions and public spaces. First up is the 2,200-seat Winspear Opera House , which hosts the three-time Tony Award-winning musical ***Life of Pi*** in August . Adjacent to it is Annette Strauss Square , a weekly outdoor event space hosting everything from yoga classes to concerts, and Elaine D. and Charles A. Sammons Park , which features grassy areas and children's play areas. All of these venues were designed by or collaborated on with Norman Foster's studio. The final space in the complex is the Dee and Charles Wyly Theatre , an intimate theater of fewer than 600 seats, designed in collaboration with several of the world's top architectural firms, including Pritzker Prize-winning Rem Koolhaas. This summer it features the Broadway classic ***Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*** .

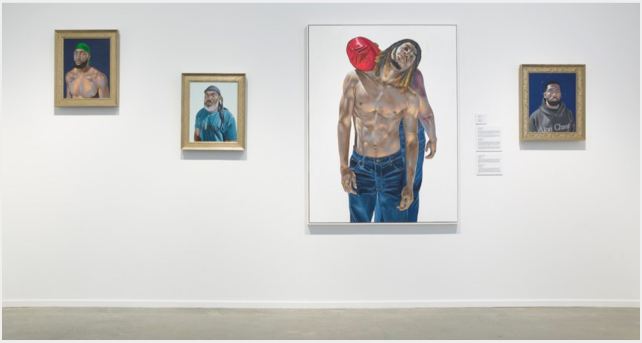
Sammons Park. Courtesy of AT&t Performing Arts Center

For those looking to experience the outdoors with their little ones, the Perot Museum of Nature and Science is the perfect destination. An architectural gem by Morphosis Architects, it showcases its permanent collection in 11 exhibition spaces, where you can explore the solar system, experience an earthquake, make your own weather predictions, pilot a bird, experiment in a biological laboratory, or test your speed against a T. rex or NFL quarterback Patrick Mahomes. New exhibitions are also coming this summer: ***Topaz: A Spectrum in Stone*** , featuring the world's finest topaz specimens, and ***Bug Lab*** , starting June 28, to explore all the secrets of insects.

PEROT MUSEUM OF NATURE AND SCIENCE

Perot Museum Entrance

One of the newest additions to the destination is The Green Family Art Foundation , a non-profit organization whose main goal is to give greater visibility and support to historically marginalized artists, hosting three carefully curated exhibitions each year of emerging and established but underrepresented artists (in fact, GFAF offers grants to museums that later want to house these works). All exhibitions are free to visit. Until September, you can visit the Robert Peterson collection called ***Somewhere in America*** , an exhibition organized in collaboration with the Wichita Art Museum , which pays tribute to the life and everyday expressions of African American communities.



Green Family Art Foundation, courtesy of Adam Green Art Advisory. Photo: Evan Sheldon

Tip: In the Dallas Art District, art is also something to eat (and drink). For breakfast, don't miss YOLK . For quick daytime options, Flora Cantina in Sammons Park offers a fusion of Mexican and Texan cuisine. The fanciest options? Michelin-starred Tei-An , featuring Japanese chef Teiichi Sakurai, and La Stella Cucina Verace , featuring chef Nicola Bacchi. End the day with a cocktail at the speakeasy Akai , behind Musume restaurant .

Musume Restaurant

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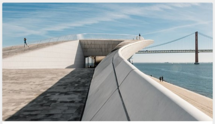

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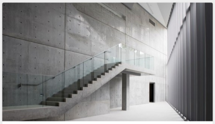
Inspiration



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