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ARTDESK

CONTEMPORARY ARTS, PERFORMANCE, AND THOUGHT | WINTER 2026



LARRY BELL

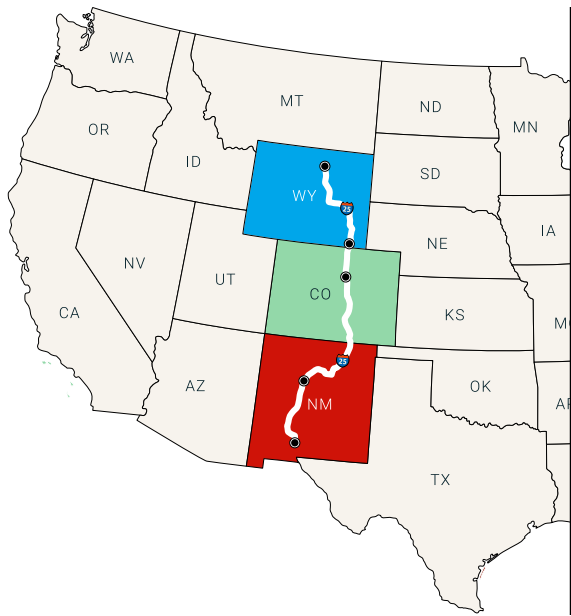
Untitled SS (Turquoise / True Fog) (2021)

Larry Bell: Improvisations is currently on view at the San Antonio Museum of Art through January 4, 2026.





DAN NAMINGHA
*Afternoon Desert
Cloud* (2024)



I - 25 FROM NM TO WY

Contemporary Corridor

By Parker Yamasaki

FROM PRINT-MAKING TO SITE-SPECIFIC
INSTALLATIONS, THE U.S. I-25 CORRIDOR REVEALS A
TRAIL OF ART IN UNEXPECTED PLACES.

YOU KNOW THE images: grass so dry it crackles at a glance, cloud-strewn skies that stretch to forever, and burnt-orange mesas with tops sheared flat as a knife’s edge. These are the images of the West, a place that artists and storytellers since time immemorial have taken inspiration from.

Driving the I-25 corridor from the desert basin of Las Cruces, along the Front Range of the Rockies and on to the high plains of Wyoming

provides not only a rich sample of classic western landscapes, but also of the ways that artists have viewed these places.

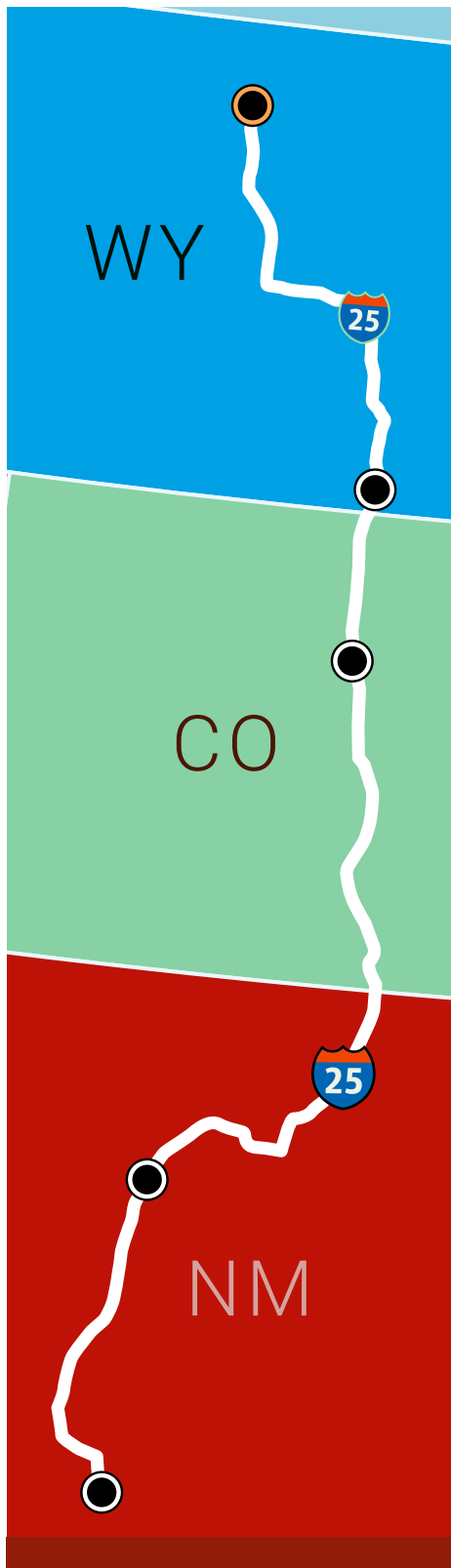
Which is not to say every artist on this list falls into the loose category of a “landscape artist,” or that every institution is a “Western institution.” What these people and places share is a sense of space. How it’s expressed takes on various forms, whether in musical compositions imbued with the desert, dramatized cowboy drawings for the

covers of pulpy western novels, or a century-old art collection with a newly reconsidered relationship to the region.

You’ll find them all along this thousand-mile stretch of road. Rather than take them in as a unit, though, think of them more like the stars of a constellation, each one a distinct form, connected by place as much as by myth. Visit them one by one or string them together to form your own story of the West—past, present, and future. Happy trails.

I - 25
FROM NM
TO WY

Contemporary Corridor



NEW MEXICO

Las Cruces

The nation's largest public collection of Mexican retablos—religious images painted on tin plates and found materials—can be found on the campus of New Mexico State University. **University Art Museum's** ▶ crown jewels number around 2,000. The mostly anonymous nineteenth-century artifacts on display are complemented by a rotating selection of contemporary artwork, and a full slate of programming ensures the borderland's contributions to the art world no longer go unsung (or unsigned). uam.nmsu.edu



▲ **Sharbani Das Gupta** is a ceramicist, printmaker, photographer, and filmmaker. If there's a thread through her many forms, it's the human connection to land. "How we connect to the earth has a lot to do with how we connect to each other." sharbanidasgupta.com

Albuquerque

Lithography thrives at the **Tamarind Institute** ▶ thanks to its visionary founder, June Wayne. The institute is deeply collaborative in spirit, with a crop of new releases from artists every year adding to its more than 8,000-work archive. Visitors can request a viewing of archived prints with advance notice, while the on-site gallery rotates exhibitions every few months. tamarind.unm.edu



▼ **Raven Chacon**, performer, installation artist, and Pulitzer Prize-winning composer was born and raised in the Navajo Nation. His work is collaborative, and occasionally involves entire municipalities, like his 2025 composition *Tiguex* with twenty overlapping movements across the entire city of Albuquerque. spiderwebsinthesky.com



Santa Fe

For a two-stop survey of Santa Fe's abundant art scene, head to the ▲ **New Mexico Museum of Art**. One ticket grants access to both the historic plaza building, founded in 1917 as the state's first repository for fine arts, and **Vladem Contemporary**, an extension opened in 2014 in the Railyard District to focus on work made post-1980. nmartmuseum.org



Art is family, business, and family business for Dan Namingha, a Hopi-Tewa painter, printmaker, and sculptor who shares a gallery space with his sons Arlo, a contemporary sculptor, and Michael, a mixed-media printmaker and photographer. All three are descendants of the Nampeyo family, a respected ancestral line of Hopi potters. Find the family's work at ◀ **Niman Fine Art**, near the historic Santa Fe Plaza. namingha.com

WYOMING



Big Horn

About thirty miles north of the I-25 terminus is the **Brinton Museum** in Big Horn (just outside of Sheridan). Taking center stage is the collection of Edith and Goelet Gallatin, who moved west from New York in the 1910s. Edith is said to have befriended locals from the Crow tribe and was given artifacts during her time in Wyoming.

For years the collection was stored at the Art Institute of Chicago until candy magnate Forrest Mars Jr. built the nearly \$16 million museum in 2015 to move the collection closer to its original home. thebrintonmuseum.org



Clearmont

North of the I-25 terminus is the **Ucross Foundation**, a 20,000-acre ranch best known for its artist residency program and illustrious alumni list stacked with Pulitzer Prize, Tony Award, Academy Award, and MacArthur "Genius" grant winners. Lesser known is the center's art gallery, which often features work or curation by Ucross fellows, and is free and open to the public Monday through Saturday. Pack a picnic lunch and grab a cold beverage from the café next door to enjoy on the expansive grounds. ucrossfoundation.org



Laramie

Laramie isn't technically along I-25, but it is the next art-filled stop for those who detour at the Wyoming border and make a break for Yellowstone National Park. Here you'll find the **University of Wyoming Art Museum**, along with a talented roster of artist-professors teaching in the art department. Among them is Bailey Russel, a photographer whose photo-making processes—think tintypes, cyanotypes, wet-plate collodion, and other experimental devices—are as interesting and integral to his photographs as the image itself. uwo.edu/artmuseum



Casper

The **Nicolaysen Art Museum**, better known as the "Nic," doubles as a contemporary art museum and a hands-on art-making center in Casper. Curation tends toward artists from the central Rockies and High Plains, and the shows rotate regularly through the airy galleries. The Nic also houses a colorful, two-story "discovery center," with painting stations, a puppet theater, and other family-friendly activities. thenic.org

COLORADO

Colorado Springs

The **Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College** ▶ has existed since 1919, when artists studied at what was then called the Broadmoor Art Academy. In 2025, the museum refreshed its display of the permanent collection to represent the region, with a four-gallery mix of contemporary and historic Native works; santos, a living tradition of devotional pieces; and East Coast painters that influenced the school’s early students. ▶ fac.coloradocollege.edu



Tucked into the mountains just northwest of Colorado Springs is Green Mountain Falls, with an average population under 1,000 and some of the region’s most engaging public art pieces. Green Mountain Falls is home to the studio of **◀Pard Morrison**, a contemporary sculptor who constructs his signature painted columns in the town’s decommissioned gymnasium. pardmorrison.com

Trinidad

If other institutions whisper of the Wild West days, the **A. R. Mitchell Museum of Western Art** ▶ screams it. This historic building on Trinidad’s main drag houses the nearly complete collection of Arthur Roy Mitchell, who spent the better part of the twentieth century immortalizing his hometown in the height of its cowboy days, from dramatic landscape paintings to pulpy Western-novel covers. armitchellmuseum.com



If the early cow-town imagery of A. R. Mitchell leaves you wanting more, look no further than the door. The front quarter of the museum is occupied by **◀Kuehl Fine Art** gallery, dedicated to expanding the cadre of Western art by slinging contemporary artists like Peggy Judy, Tony Thielen, and Maia Chávez Larkin. [@kuehlfineart](https://www.instagram.com/kuehlfineart)

Pueblo

The **Sangre de Cristo Arts Center** ▶ is the long-serving anchor of Pueblo’s vibrant scene, with six galleries, a dance school, an arts school, a performing-arts venue, and a children’s museum. Of particular interest is the permanent display of Gene Kloss, an artist from the 1920s Taos art colony, where she began producing intaglio prints. sdc-arts.org



In 2009, sculptor **◀John Wilbar** told the *Pueblo Chieftain* that he hoped his hometown of Pueblo would become a place where young artists could stay and make work. “It may be a pipe dream,” he told the local paper. Today, Wilbar’s daughter, **◀Meghan Wilbar**, is an accomplished contemporary artist, whose paintings are visions of Pueblo’s hulking steel mill and open roads, with the painter’s perspective always tilted upward, eyes toward the clouds, feet planted in Pueblo. johnwilbar.com and meghanwilbar.com

Denver

True to its name, the **Museum of Contemporary Art Denver** ▶ is concerned only with what is contemporary. The museum’s only mandate: to show work of this time. To execute its mission, the museum doesn’t collect art, but rather uses its resources to commission new work, dedicating its four stories to a rotation of international, national, and local artists. mcadenver.org



◀Steven J. Yazzie is all over the West. Some of his work intentionally centers that movement; Yazzie is a co-founder of the Museum of Walking, which researches and leads walks as an artistic practice. Other works are a by-product of motion. His ongoing “Drawing & Driving” project, for instance, consists of drawings made while pedaling a custom bike; while his “Drifting & Painting” series was created during a river raft float. yazziestudio.com

KEEP IT MOVING

The Greenland Overpass creates safe passage for wildlife.

THERE IS A stretch of road between Colorado Springs and Denver where the cities give way to miles of forested mountains and rolling prairie hills. Much of that open space is the result of the **Douglas Land Conservancy**, a

citizen initiative formed in 1987 to prevent the Colorado’s largest and second-largest cities from merging into a giant megalopolis, paving over thousands of acres of habitat for bears, bobcats, antelope, coyote, elk, foxes, and small mammals. But

what good is all that conserved land if the wildlife can’t use it?

Since 1996 the Colorado Department of Transportation has partnered with county, state, and federal agencies to shore up an eighteen-mile stretch of I-25 known as “the gap” by adorning it with miles of wildlife fencing, five underpasses, and sixty-three “escape ramps” for animals stuck on the wrong side of the fence.

The decades-long project reaches its high point with the **Greenland Overpass**, a 40,000 square-foot bridge that is covered in native grasses and spans six lanes of highway. And while driving

beneath a herd of elk heading to their wintering grounds is majestic on its own, the main point of the project is safety—fences and crossings are shown to reduce wildlife vehicle crashes by about 80 percent.

Colorado is considered a leader in animal infrastructure, but only a handful of crossings are above ground, the preference of large, skittish ungulates like pronghorn that hesitate to use the tunnels without the advantage of clear sight lines. And that’s exactly what the citizen activists worked to establish almost forty years ago: a road with a view. —PARKER YAMASAKI



The Greenland Overpass

Necessities





DANA GOLAN

TIMOTHY DOYON © JUDD FOUNDATION. ART © LARRY BELL



▲ Installation view of *Irresponsible Iridescence*, on view at Judd Foundation in New York through January 31, 2026.

LARRY BELL'S MOMENT MIRROR MIRROR

GLASS HAS BEEN Larry Bell's muse since the 1960s, when he emerged as part of the West Coast minimalists, who reimagined sculpture as something shaped by a viewer's interaction. Crafting cubes with transfixing smoky textures and, later, more colorful hues, he expressed how glass transforms light, changing with each angle or time of day.

A central figure in California's Light and Space movement, he is, at eighty-five, having a landmark moment with three concurrent exhibitions: two in New York and one at the San Antonio Art Museum through January 4, 2026. Each spotlights how he is still innovating with material in deceptively simple forms.

At Manhattan's Judd

Foundation—the former home and studio of his late friend Donald Judd—*Irresponsible Iridescence*, open until January 31, 2026, centers on his 2024 “Solar Studies” series. Bell uses almost entirely solar power in his New Mexico studio, with these two-dimensional collages featuring vaporous layers of metallic and acrylic film, iterating on his longtime use of vacuum coating processes.

Meanwhile, uptown in Madison Square Park, *Improvisations in the Park* offers a new way to experience his luminous works across the seasons, as fall leaves and snow gather around blue glass boxes and squirrels bound between sleek red forms. On view through March 15, 2026, the exhibition consists of two new,



DANA GOLAN

Larry Bell

six- and eight-foot-tall standing wall sculptures alongside four existing works. Additionally, two never-before-exhibited works will sit alongside two existing works.

“Every day with the changing weather and light, the pieces dynamically shift, making for many repeat views,” says Denise Markonish, chief curator at Madison Square Park. “It’s been great to watch people stop, even in busy moments, and appreciate the wonder they produce.”

—ALLISON MEIER

◀ *Untitled SS (Turquoise / True Fog)* (2021), part of *Larry Bell: Improvisations* on view at the San Antonio Art Museum through January 4, 2026.

AIRI KATSUTA



◀ Installation view of *Improvisations in the Park*, on view at Madison Square Park in New York through January 31, 2026.

D O S S I E R

by Christian Keesee

Questions? Comments?
DM me @christian.keesee

In this issue we take a look at the ten most populous cities in the world and explore their most significant cultural offerings.



TOKYO, JAPAN ◀
Population 41.2 million | The first megacity, Tokyo truly has something for everyone. The Tokyo National Museum is overflowing with Buddhist art and politeness. The museum’s tea house and garden are not to be missed. Mount Fuji is always in the back drop as are beautiful shrines and temples.



SHANGHAI, CHINA ▲
Population 41.2 million | A French outpost no longer, Shanghai is a metropolis of finance and trade. In a corner of the Shanghai Museum is the Linda and Roger Doo Numismatic Collection of 1,783 coins from the Greeks to the Mongol empire. Yuyuan Old Street is a historic walking and shopping district near the former French Concession giving a look back on the city’s history.



MUMBAI, INDIA ▲
Population 27.6 million | More akin to Los Angeles than New York, Mumbai is known as the “City of Dreams” and is the film and movie capital of India. The largest museum, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, is less about Kama Sutra and more about Indian art, textiles, and culture.



SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL ▲
Population 22.6 million | Brazilians know how to enjoy life...but you better review your Portuguese language flash cards. You’ll often hear, “*eu não entendo*” when you try to speak Spanish or English. The Museu de Arte de São Paulo is well known for its architecture and unexpectedly strong collection of European art, including Titian, Rafael, and Botticelli’s *Virgin and Child with the Infant St. John the Baptist*.



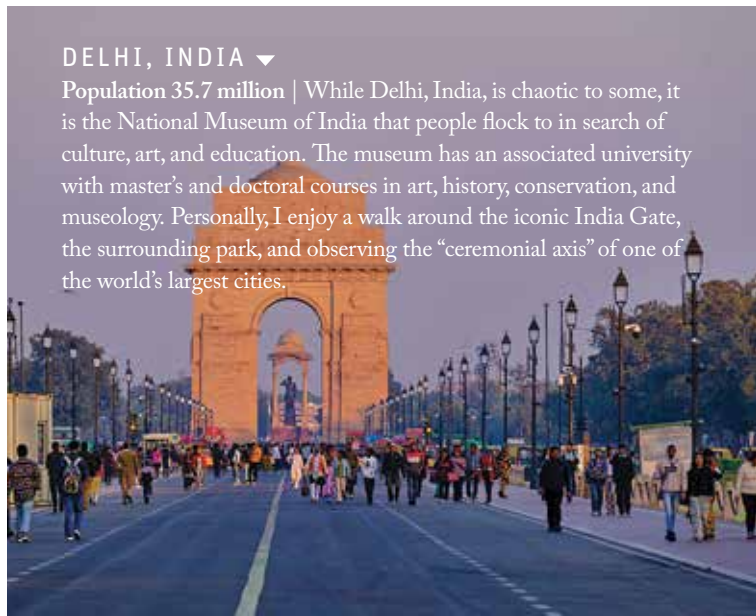
BEIJING, CHINA ▶
Population 21.5 million | The Forbidden City has the distinction of being in the heart of Beijing—and at the heart of Chinese culture. It’s the largest preserved royal palace complex in the world, dating from 1420 AD.



DHAKA, BANGLADESH ◀
Population 23.1 million | While the capital city’s National Museum is important, it is the National Parliament House that steals the show culturally and architecturally. Designed by Louis Kahn (when the country was still part of Pakistan), and completed in 1982, it serves as one of the best examples of Brutalist architecture, and has become a national symbol of democracy and pride.



NEW YORK, U.S. ▲
Population 21.8 million | The largest city in the U.S. is New York—in no other city in the world are so many languages spoken, so many nationalities represented, or freedom more symbolized (the Statue of Liberty hosts around 4 million visitors per year). It is the Metropolitan Museum of Art that stands out as the largest museum in the U.S. and the Americas. While many European museums were formed from collections of royalty, the Met was formed by gifts from the people. Its collections span all of humankind, are in conversations with other museums, performing arts organizations, and cultural institutions that come together to make New York the most culturally significant city in the world.



DELHI, INDIA ▼
Population 35.7 million | While Delhi, India, is chaotic to some, it is the National Museum of India that people flock to in search of culture, art, and education. The museum has an associated university with master’s and doctoral courses in art, history, conservation, and museology. Personally, I enjoy a walk around the iconic India Gate, the surrounding park, and observing the “ceremonial axis” of one of the world’s largest cities.



MEXICO CITY, MEXICO ▲
Population 25.4 million | Mexico City is one of the most sophisticated cities in the world. Its culture and appreciation of art are ancient. The National Museum of Anthropology is the largest and most visited museum—and adjacent to the famous Chapultepec Park. While small and intimate, don’t forget the Frida Kahlo Museum. It is a hidden gem.



First Class

A NEW ARTIST RESIDENCY
IN OKLAHOMA



▲ ISA RODRIGUEZ
Kalaira 04 (2025)

OVER THE COURSE of this year, Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center launched a new residency program, with local multidisciplinary artists Isa Rodriguez and Dylan Cale Jones as its inaugural honorees. The goal of the initiative is to fortify the local creative community by supporting the careers of emerging and established artists based in Oklahoma City. Residents can leverage Oklahoma Contemporary’s Studio School education facilities

and equipment to make new work, teach classes, and build connection between students, instructors, and industry professionals. “I think it’s valuable for people in the Studio School community to see an artist-in-residence, a professional artist working in a really ambitious mode,” Rodriguez says. “It’s really started to open up what’s possible creatively for the students and the renters and the other people who use that space.” The year-long residency

marks a new chapter in the partnership of Rodriguez and Jones, who co-founded the arts-education project *Practice, Practice*—which features podcasts, books, and other materials to help creatives thrive. Now the pair are getting their own dose of support, with full access to resources that might otherwise be out of reach for many working artists. “The material support provided by the residency has

been huge. They’re providing us with all the clay we need to work in the ceramic studio, and providing us with firing,” says Jones, who teaches ceramics at Studio School. “Access to that material is really liberating. I don’t feel as apprehensive to try things or take risks.”

—JEZY J. GRAY



◀ DYLAN JONES
Witnesses (2025)

OLIVIER SOULIE



Hervé Koubi Company performing
What the Day Owes to the Night.

PRESERVING AND ELEVATING PERFORMANCE

DANCE EVOLUTION

HERVÉ KOUBI COMPANY'S genre-blending performance *What the Day Owes to the Night* returns to the Joyce Theater in New York in January with the help of Dance Reflections, a program bringing international dance to audiences around the world.

Inspired by Algerian author Yasmina Khadra's novel, *What The Day Owes The Night* combines martial arts with contemporary and urban dance to explore family lineage and the tension between movements of expression and movements of force. French-Algerian choreographer Hervé Koubi visited Algeria to learn more about his family's roots through dance, collaborating with street performers across the Mediterranean, and ultimately creating this dynamic work.

Dance Reflections works to encourage

new productions and to preserve historical choreographic works. The program began in 2020, an initiative by the storied luxury jewelry company Van Cleef & Arpels, which has its own unique history with dance. In 1920s Paris, Louis Arpels frequented the ballet with his nephew, and in the 1950s Claude Arpels began collaborating with George Balanchine, co-founder of the New York City Ballet. As the *maison's* creative endeavors continued, dance remained intimately intertwined.

"Dance Reflections was born in this context because it was our wish to bear witness to the evolution of this art," says Serge Laurent, Van Cleef & Arpels' director of dance and cultural programs. "We wanted to share with the public the mystery of creation that we find in contemporary approaches."

Since the initiative began, Dance

Reflections has built a network of partners in fifteen countries, including institutions in France, China, Japan, the United Kingdom, Mexico, Senegal, and the U.S., like the Joyce Theater. It also produces an annual festival in a different city each year, often staging performances in untraditional locations, like public gardens or the lobby of a museum.

What the Day Owes to the Night features an all-male cast of thirteen dancers from Algeria and Morocco, accompanied by a combination of Sufi sounds recorded on the strings of Kronos Quartet, music by Egyptian composer Hamza El Din, and excerpts from Johann Sebastian Bach's *Passions*. — KELLY ROGERS

Hervé Koubi Company's What the Day Owes to the Night will be at New York City's Joyce Theater from January 6–January 11, 2026. ▶ joyce.org

The BOOK REPORT

BY ALANA RUIZ DE LA PEÑA | PHOTOGRAPHY BY BAILEY WALKER

Black Chronicles: Photography, Race and Difference in Victorian Britain

Edited by Renée Mussai, \$65

Unseen for decades, many of these photos were buried deep in private and public archives. This book compiles high-quality reproductions of some of the earliest known images of Black people photographed in Britain, filling in a crucial missing piece in history. Published in partnership with legendary London art gallery Autograph, *Black Chronicles* is a comprehensive collection of nineteenth-century photography depicting the Black subject in the Victorian era.

Blow Up!: The Explosion of Contemporary Art

Robert Shore and Eva Rossetti, \$25

The history of contemporary art's first century—but as a graphic novel. A clever take on the historical chronicle, *Blow Up!* weaves together the stories, context of world events, and chance meetings of iconic artists, including Jean-Michel Basquiat, Yayoi Kusama, Andy Warhol, and Marcel Duchamp. This book explains the art of our time in a way that's enjoyable and easy to understand.

Art of Native America: The Charles and Valerie Diker Collection

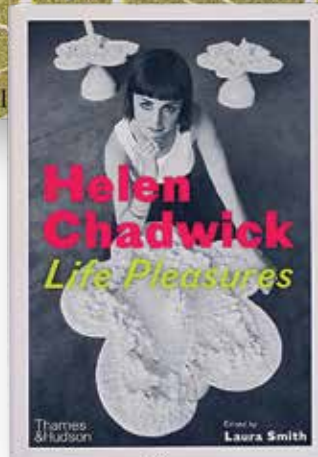
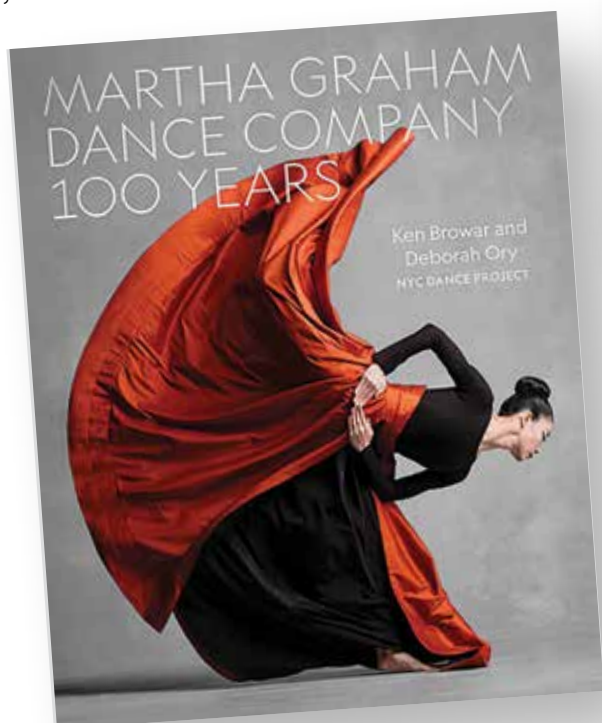
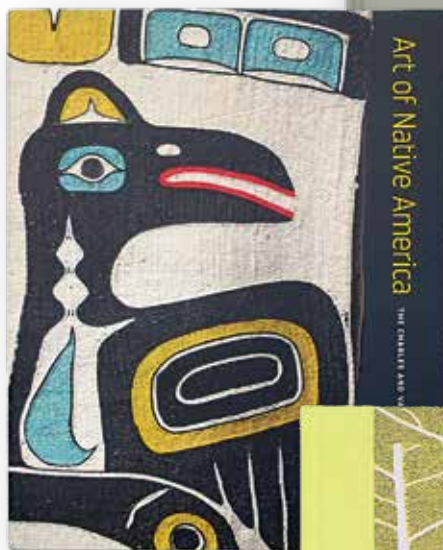
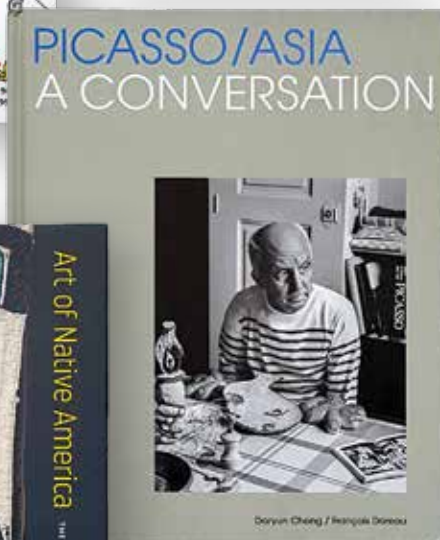
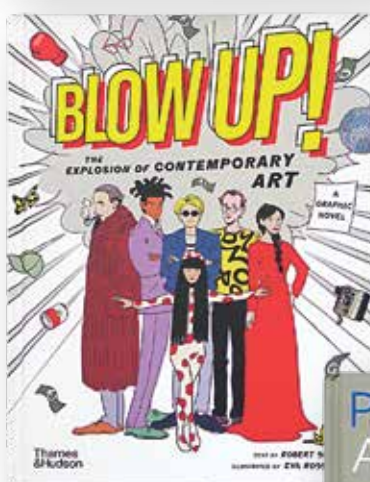
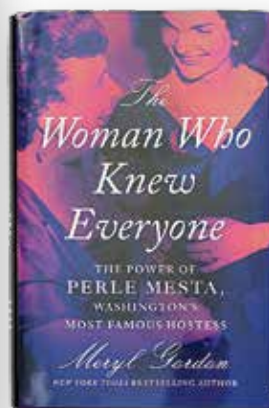
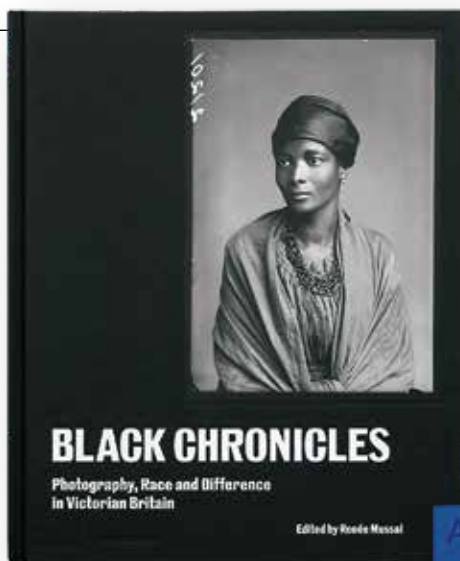
Gaylord Torrence, \$50

The Charles and Valerie Diker Collection, a transformative gift to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, includes masterworks from more than fifty cultures across North America. This book catalogs a collection that spans the second century to the twentieth, and provides insight that positions Native American art within the broader context of American art history.

Martha Graham Dance Company: 100 Years

Ken Browar and Deborah Ory, \$55

A celebration of the oldest dance company in the U.S., *100 Years* is a triumph of beautiful photography and stunning compositions. Created by the team behind the NYC Dance Project, this tribute re-creates more than twenty of Graham's most memorable works. The photographers capture these tableaux with dancers from the Martha Graham Dance Company, who continue to carry the mantle of Graham's legacy.



The Woman Who Knew Everyone: The Power of Perle Mesta, Washington's Most Famous Hostess

Meryl Gordon, \$34

"Whether I give a party in New York or London or Hollywood or Washington, I like to have guests who are in the thick of things," said Perle Mesta. The grande dame of Washington, D.C., was a charming, beautiful, and wealthy widow. Her parties were legendary, mixing celebrities and politicians. She became close to Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, and Lyndon Johnson, and was an early supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment. This delightful biography traces the roots and rise of an American socialite.

Arab Design Now

Edited by Rana Beiruti, \$50

Published in conjunction with emerging design biennial Design Doha, *Arab Design Now* is a comprehensive survey of regional design talent. From architecture to fashion to furniture-making, this small book makes a big statement about the state of art and design across the Levant, the Persian Gulf, and North Africa. "It was important to demonstrate that the Arab world is ... a very diverse landscape of cultures, influences, and craft," says Rana Beiruti, curator of the 2024 biennial.

Picasso/Asia: A Conversation

Doryun Chung and François Dureau, \$60

Accompanying a major exhibition at M+, a contemporary art museum in Hong Kong, this book juxtaposes Pablo Picasso's classic works with art by Asian and Asian-diasporic artists. The exhibition aimed to look at Picasso's works in a new way, revealing more about the effects of migration and the marketplace of ideas on present-day artists.

Eventually Everything Connects: Mid-Century Modern Design in the U.S.

Andrew Satake Blauvelt and Bridget Bartal, \$90

Organized by Cranbrook Art Museum, just outside Detroit, Michigan, this book is a playfully elegant tour through the iconic designs of the 1950s and 1960s. *Eventually Everything Connects* honors not only the stars of the movement, like Charles and Ray Eames, Harry Bertoia, and Florence Knoll, but also many of the graphic designers, photographers, and architects who made up one of the most important eras in American industrial design.

Helen Chadwick: Life Pleasures

Laura Smith, \$40

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Helen Chadwick's career was on an upward trajectory. In 1987, she was the first woman nominated for the esteemed Turner Prize, an annual award for British contemporary artists. After her sudden death in 1996, her influence on British art has been all but forgotten. *Life Pleasures* is the first biography of this pioneering feminist artist, exploring how her passions for art education, music, and politics informed her art-making.



SAVANTHA HOOVER



KATHRYN JAGELKA



▲ Clockwise from top left: Performance by MorDance during Free First Fridays at the Hudson River Museum; exhibition view of *Silver Linings* showcasing the permanent collection of Spelman College; exhibition view of *Home, Love, and Loss* at the Art Museum of South Texas; Salsa Night during a free first Friday in the courtyard of the Hudson River Museum.

A BRIDGE BETWEEN COMMUNITY AND ART

MINDING THE GAP



ART BRIDGES IS helping museums reach their potential to become strong community hubs across the country. Created in 2017 by the renowned philanthropist, art collector, and entrepreneur Alice Walton, the Art Bridges Foundation has quickly become an unsung yet unparalleled collaborator in the arts, helping institutions across the U.S. mount thoughtful and exciting exhibitions, talks, events, and public installations.

With a network of more than 250 large, small, and medium-sized museums, Art Bridges loans out American art from its top-notch collection of more than 200 objects to museums free of charge as a way to get artworks out of storage and into communities. It also facilitates loans between museums within the network, provides logistical support, and covers

preparation and presentation costs. The goal is to get as many eyes as possible on the best artworks our country has to offer—but it also does so much more.

Much of this important work falls on the shoulders of Art Bridges CEO Anne Kraybill. Since joining the team at the beginning of 2024, Kraybill has turbo-charged Art Bridges’ mission with a slew of new projects, highlighted by the foundation’s inaugural Bridgemaker Prize, which bestowed \$50,000 each onto three deserving museum partners. This year’s winners were the Hudson River Museum in Yonkers, New York; the Peoria Riverfront Museum in Peoria, Illinois; and the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art in Atlanta, Georgia.

“[Alice Walton] really wanted institutions to work differently with each other,” says Kraybill, “and we wanted to acknowledge institutions we thought had completely changed their operational approach and the dynamism of their exhibition programming or permanent collections, and who, frankly, are taking a risk via their partnership with us.”

Meanwhile, Art Bridges’ Cohort Program, which Kraybill described as “an ecosystem of art-sharing between institutions,” has been an innovative way to get transformative programming into museums across the nation.

The Texas cohort has been so successful that it has participated in three exhibitions over three years. The most recent of those, *Home, Love, and Loss*, an exhibition exploring the cycles of family life and the universal threads

of human connection, ran from February 14–April 27, 2025. This unique partnership was initiated by the Amon Carter Museum of American Art in Fort Worth, Texas, and includes the Art Museum of South Texas in Corpus Christi, the Amarillo Museum of Art in Amarillo, and the Ellen Noël Art Museum in Odessa.

“Our primary motivation in participating in the Cohort Program was to expand community engagement and diversify our audience by creating more inclusive and innovative exhibitions,” says Alexis De León, marketing coordinator for the Art Museum of South Texas. Over the three years it has taken part in the cohort program, participation at the museum has skyrocketed, particularly among underrepresented groups. It even seems to have, in De León’s words, “reinforced the museum’s role as a cultural hub in the region.”

Looking to the future, the Art Bridges team will work alongside Walton’s Heartland Whole Health Institute, an organization dedicated to transforming health care across the U.S. Art Bridges has selected six partner museums that will receive support to execute projects that advance community health.

By continuing to build the bridge between art and community, Art Bridges aims to create what Kraybill says are “meaningful experiences with art that nurture both personal and community well-being.” —RYAN STEADMAN

For more information about Art Bridges and to browse available collections ► artbridgesfoundation.org

HAPPENINGS

NEW AND NOW IN ART & PERFORMANCE | BY ALLISON C. MEIER

MARK ROTHKO PAVILION ▼

Portland Art Museum / Portland, Oregon
The Portland Art Museum’s two buildings are now linked by a new expansion, which is named for Mark Rothko, who spent part of his childhood in the city after his family immigrated from Latvia. While the luminous glass pavilion offers an essential connection for visitor flow, it will be complemented by a planned two decades of loans from the private collection of Rothko’s family. The pavilion’s opening coincides with the first stage of that relationship: a chronological exhibition on his evocative blocks of color. *Now open.*
► portlandartmuseum.org



NEW HUMANS: Memories of the Future

New Museum / New York, New York
The New Museum is reopening after a major expansion with a new angular addition by Shohei Shigematsu and Rem Koolhaas of OMA. The debut exhibition in this bolstered space is an ambitious examination of humanity at a time when technology is altering and challenging what that means. It features more than 150 international creators, including artists, writers, scientists, and architects, and contrasts the contemporary to the historic through artists

like Francis Bacon, H. R. Giger, and Salvador Dalí, revealing how human’s relationship with technology is ever evolving. *Opening in 2026.*
► newmuseum.org

LE’ANDRA LESEUR: Monument Eternal

Tulsa Artist Fellowship Flagship / Tulsa, Oklahoma
There is no marker at the bridge in Okemah, Oklahoma, where Laura Nelson and her son L.D. were lynched in 1911. How invisible histories of racial violence can be perceived and felt in the land is something Le’Andra LeSeur has been investigating in her art. This exhibition excavates that legacy of white supremacy in Oklahoma with new work in sculpture and

photography, alongside LeSeur’s video response to the 1970s confederate monument Stone Mountain in Georgia through her survival of a seemingly endless fall. *Through January 10, 2026.*
► tulsaartistfellowship.org

VOICE OF SPACE: UFOs and Paranormal Phenomena

The Drawing Center / New York, New York
In the vastness of the universe, are we truly alone? This exhibition explores how artists have responded to the idea of visitations from beings

beyond Earth as well as unexplained phenomena that reveal the limits of our knowledge. Titled after a 1931 painting by René Magritte of bell-like orbs hovering over a pastoral landscape, *Voice of Space* brings together historical and contemporary artists, from Melvin Way, who sketched mysterious systems on scraps of paper, to Paulina Peavy, whose art channeled an extraterrestrial spirit. *Through February 1, 2026.*
► drawingcenter.org

SPIRIT & SPLENDOR: El Greco, Velázquez, and the Hispanic Baroque

Blanton Museum of Art / Austin, Texas
The Blanton Museum has one of the major collections of Latin American modern and contemporary art; this touring exhibition complements its holdings through a look at the past. Featuring art from the Hispanic Society Museum & Library in New York, it spans the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, chronicling how Spain’s expansion as an empire influenced art in this country and in Mexico and South America. Lush works by El Greco, Diego Velázquez, and others are among the sixty-odd pieces, revealing how the Baroque style permeated religion, the court, and daily life. *Through February 1, 2026.*
► blantonmuseum.org

MARTIN PURYEAR: Nexus ▼

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston / Boston, Massachusetts
When Martin Puryear represented the U.S. at the 2019 Venice Biennale, he made a sculpture in tribute to Sally Hemings, who was enslaved by Thomas Jefferson, by spearing a white neoclassical column with a cast-iron shackle on a stake. The artist has for five decades created sculptures with such minimalist, abstract forms that directly reference history. More than forty works are included in this retrospective that contextualizes his engagement with traditional methods like boat building and joinery. *Through February 8, 2026.*
► mfa.org

ROBERT COTTINGHAM: An American Alphabet

OSU Museum of Art / Stillwater, Oklahoma
Robert Cottingham’s photo-realistic paintings of signage are inspired by his travels across the country, particularly a 1974 Greyhound bus odyssey in which he visited twenty-seven cities. The thousands of slides he produced from that journey fed into *An American Alphabet*. His compositions fragment bits of the vernacular of storefronts, advertising, and marquees, and

freeze them in time, allowing a close look at how we communicate through color and form. *Through February 14, 2026.*
► museum.okstate.edu

DEBORAH JACK: the haunting of estuaries...an (after)meth of confluence

MCA Denver / Denver, Colorado
Deborah Jack works between two coastal places, the island of St. Maarten and Jersey City, New Jersey, creating multi-channel video installations that highlight our relationships to our fragile shores. This piece at MCA Denver merges footage of the sea and its life from Maine, Louisiana, Belém, Brazil, and St. Maarten, exploring how our coasts are changing due to extreme weather and erosion from climate change. In the sublimity of the sounds and sights of waves and tides is a question of how the flow of these waterways relate to a global culture and history. *Through February 15, 2026.*
► mcadenver.org

ANDREA CARLSON: A Constant Sky

Denver Art Museum / Denver, Colorado
In her panoramic works on paper that can reach colossal size which, Andrea Carlson mashes up cultural influences to evoke the violence of colonialism and the potential for renewal. References to cannibalism in horror films are placed next to those on how institutions feasted upon Indigenous culture for their collections. This is the first major survey for the Ojibwe artist, and along with multimedia paintings made from paper panels, she is presenting a sculptural piece commissioned by the Denver Art Museum that further reconfigures the fragments of history to anticipate a different future. *Through February 16, 2026.*
► denverartmuseum.org

HENRI ROUSSEAU: A Painter’s Secrets

The Barnes Foundation / Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Henri Rousseau never left France, and he spent much of his career as a toll collector. Then in the late nineteenth century, he began to paint. He depicted mysterious jungles where nude figures lounged and wide-eyed lions prowled among dense exotic flora. This exhibition at the Barnes, which has one of the biggest collections of his art, is a rare chance to see more than sixty of his works, which have been reevaluated through a new study of the self-taught painter’s enigmatic technique. *Through February 22, 2026.*
► barnesfoundation.org

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG: Fabric Works of the 1970s

The Menil Collection / Houston, Texas
Many institutions are marking a hundred years





since Robert Rauschenberg’s birth on October 22, 1925. The Menil is using the opportunity to showcase a side of his art that is less well known than his large, frenetic mixed-media paintings. In the 1970s, he experimented extensively with textiles, such as sculptural work involving mosquito nets and large hanging panels. He also went beyond stationary objects in collaborating with choreographers like Trisha Brown and Merce Cunningham on silk-screened costumes and diaphanous sets. *Through March 1, 2026.* ▶ [menil.org](#)

MANET & MORISOT

Legion of Honor / San Francisco, California
The recent *Manet/Degas* exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York was a blockbuster, and this pairing of Édouard Manet with Berthe Morisot, two French artists likewise entwined through Impressionism, promises to be equally revelatory. Morisot has too often been viewed as more of a muse to Manet, who created striking portraits of the painter, and this exhibition emphasizes their equal impact on the development of modern art. Major loans from the Musée d’Orsay, National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., J. Paul Getty Museum, and others make it a must-see show. *Through March 1, 2026.* ▶ [famsf.org](#)

THE STARS WE DO NOT SEE:
Australian Indigenous Art ▶

National Gallery of Art / Washington, D.C.
This is a landmark event for the presentation of Australian art in the U.S. Organized by Melbourne’s National Gallery of Victoria, the sprawling show includes more than 200 pieces by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists dating from the nineteenth century to the present. Along with bark and canvas paintings with intricate dot patterns by artists like

Emily Kam Kngwarray, the exhibit presents watercolor landscapes by Albert Namatjira and contemporary work in video, sound, and even neon. Following its D.C. debut, *The Stars We Do Not See* travels to the Denver Art Museum in Colorado, Portland Art Museum in Oregon, Peabody Essex Museum in Massachusetts, and Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. *Through March 1, 2026.* ▶ [nga.gov](#)

RIVERS & ROADS: Steven Yazzie in Action

Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art / Norman, Oklahoma
Art is not something Steven Yazzie creates while standing still. In the “Drawing & Driving” series, the Diné/Laguna Pueblo artist propels himself downhill in a gravity-powered vehicle and attempts the impossible task of sketching the world as it flies past. In “Drifting & Painting,” he undertakes a similar endeavor on a boat, the resulting watercolors abstracted from the bobbing currents. For this



solo show which brings together work from the two series, Yazzie will continue “Drawing & Driving” with some careening around the University of Oklahoma campus. *Through March 15, 2026.* ▶ [ou.edu/hjma](#)



BRUCE GOFF: Material Worlds ▲

Art Institute of Chicago / Chicago, Illinois
With boldly organic designs that incorporate glass ashtrays as accents and pie tins as light fixtures, Bruce Goff was an architect of unrivaled experimentation. He designed homes, churches, and buildings across the Midwest and Great Plains and was part of the University of Oklahoma’s faculty from 1947–1955, influencing students to make their own avant-garde statements. *Material Worlds* gives Goff the major retrospective his fantastic work deserves, especially as many of his masterpieces in Oklahoma, like the Bavinger House in Norman and Shin’en Kan in Bartlesville, have been lost over the years. *December 21, 2025–March 29, 2026.* ▶ [artic.edu](#)

AMY SHERALD: American Sublime ◀

Baltimore Museum of Art / Baltimore, Maryland
Amy Sherald canceled her exhibition planned for the National Portrait Gallery after her painting of a transgender model posing as the Statue of Liberty was being weighed for removal under the Trump administration’s scrutiny of the Smithsonian. Now that postponed edition of her traveling survey—the largest presentation of her work to date—makes its debut in Baltimore. Brought to widespread attention by her portrait of Michelle Obama, Sherald’s paintings are richly colored depictions of Black life made with poetic simplicity. *Through April 5, 2026.* ▶ [artbma.org](#)



CONTEMPORARY ANISHINAABE ART:
A Continuation ◀

Detroit Institute of Arts / Detroit, Michigan
Featuring more than sixty Anishinaabe artists, *A Continuation* represents the first major exhibition of Native American work at the Detroit Institute of Arts in thirty years. Its broad sweep of media underscores the diversity of creative expression by Indigenous creators from the Great Lakes region. This includes black ash baskets by Kelly Church, textural watercolors of Ojibwe people by Patrick DesJarlait, and Norval Morrisseau’s pop-culture-inspired pictographic acrylic paintings. The organization of the show is thoughtfully oriented to the community it is celebrating, with gallery label text in Anishinaabemowin. *Through April 5, 2026.* ▶ [dia.org](#)

SHAHRYAR NASHAT: Raw Is the Red

Aspen Art Museum / Aspen, Colorado
Shahryar Nashat subtly alters museum spaces, such as adjusting the lighting or changing the flooring to match the linoleum in his own home, to encourage reflection on what is inside and outside of us. The artist’s work in video, photography, and sculpture is frequently macabre, spotlighting ways bodies can be damaged and decay. This installation centers on what he calls a “meat object” joined by a stone sculpture carved with veins, the saturation of magenta throughout contributing to the unease. *Through April 26, 2026.* ▶ [aspenartmuseum.org](#)

NEW AFRICAN MASQUERADES:
Artistic Innovations and Collaborations

San Antonio Museum of Art / San Antonio, Texas

African art is too often displayed in museums anonymously, with no name of attribution for its creator. *New African Masquerades* makes a deliberate connection between the communities and artists behind its kaleidoscopic masks and costumes. Concentrating on West Africa and highlighting artists in four regions, the exhibition surrounds the ensembles on view with photographs and video, conveying how the vibrant assemblages of beads, sequins, feathers, raffia, cloth, wood, and other materials are part of gatherings and performances with a significance that ranges from the spiritual to the social. *February 27–July 5, 2026.* ▶ [samuseum.org](#)

CARLOS CRUZ-DIEZ: Chromosaturation

Pérez Art Museum Miami / Miami, Florida
When Venezuelan artist Carlos Cruz-Diez died in 2019 at age ninety-five, he was recognized as a pioneer in Op art which, encouraged interaction with color. He used simple materials like cardboard, aluminum, and acrylic to make immersive light environments and sculptural pieces in which hues appear to vibrate. This re-staging of a 1965 installation has three connected spaces, each with a different color—blue, red, and green—and pushes visual perception to its limits while challenging ideas about color as a static thing. *Through September 27, 2026.* ▶ [pamm.org](#)



Movers & Shakers

WHEN IT COMES TO THE ARTS, WHAT YOU SEE ON THE STAGE, SCREEN, OR GALLERY WALL IS JUST PART OF THE STORY. FROM CURATORS TO ARTISTIC DIRECTORS, FINANCIAL OFFICERS AND POINTS IN BETWEEN, HERE ARE TWENTY-FIVE NEWLY APPOINTED INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS MAKING THEIR MARK FROM INSIDE THE WIDE WORLD OF CULTURE.

By Jezy J. Gray



◀ **Tahnee Ahtone**, *Curator, Native American Art / Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art*

As a citizen of the Kiowa Tribe and descendant of the Seminole and Mvskoke Nations, Tahnee Ahtone brings a deep well of Indigenous knowledge as curator of Native American art at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri. Past appointments include tribal-nations liaison and curator of the American Indian and textile collections at Oklahoma History Research Center.



▲ **Heather Li**, *Chief Financial Officer / American Ballet Theatre*

With a background ranging from Fortune 500 companies to nonprofits, Heather Li has more than twenty years of experience that she brings to American Ballet Theatre as the organization's CFO. She served in a similar capacity at the Brooklyn Museum, and the transition marks a full-circle moment: Li started with ABT as an intern in 2017. "Returning to the organization feels both inspiring and deeply meaningful," she says.

▶ **Angelica Arbelaez**, *Assistant Curator, Modern and Contemporary Art / High Museum of Art*

With the goal of expanding exhibition programming and collection growth through targeted acquisitions, Angelica Arbelaez was brought on as the new assistant curator of modern and contemporary art at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia. Arbelaez previously served as the Rubio Butterfield Family Fellow at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.



◀ **Maria Castro**, *Associate Curator, Modern and Contemporary Art / The Metropolitan Museum of Art*

The Metropolitan Museum of Art is gearing up for an expansion in 2030 with the Oscar L. and H. M. Agnes Hsu-Tang Wing, a new home for twentieth- and twenty-first-century art. In September 2025, curator Maria Castro began as the Jacques & Natasha Gelman Associate Curator in the Department of Modern and Contemporary Art. "I look forward to reimagining the presentation of modern and contemporary art in this context and within the broader context of the Met's incredible collection," Castro said in a statement.





► **Emily Comisar**, *Artistic Director / Oklahoma City Repertory Theater*

With an MFA in theater management and producing from Columbia University and years of experience as a producer, general manager, and fundraiser, Emily Comisar brings an impressive skill set as artistic director at the OKC Rep Theater. “Oklahoma City has a vibrant and growing arts community,” Comisar says. “I look forward to deepening the many partnerships and relationships that have been core to OKC Rep’s success since its reboot in 2022.”



▼ **Dana McCrory**, *Executive Director / Oklahoma City Ballet*

Dana McCrory was named the John Kirkpatrick executive director of Oklahoma City Ballet in July 2025, but her roots stretch beyond the dance world. Previous posts include executive director of university initiatives for the University of Oklahoma Foundation and president and CEO of the Oklahoma Humane Society.

◀ **Shannon Gilbert**, *President and CEO / Oklahoma Arts Institute*

Following her instrumental work in major philanthropic campaigns at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., Shannon Gilbert was named president and CEO of the Oklahoma Arts Institute in June 2025. The appointment was announced in the run-up to the organization’s forty-ninth annual Oklahoma Summer Arts Institute at Quartz Mountain, a two-week interdisciplinary arts academy for high school students.

▼ **Andrea Albo**, *Executive Director / Science and Cultural Facilities District*

After more than two decades of public service in the Mile High City, Andrea Albo was recently appointed executive director of Denver’s Scientific and Cultural Facilities District. The University of Colorado graduate was named one of the 2025 Outstanding Women in Business by the *Denver Business Journal* and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Trailblazer of the Year by *Airport Experience News*.



◀ **Alicia Graf Mack**, *Artistic Director / Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater*

Previously a performer on the Alvin Ailey stage, celebrated dancer and educator Alicia Graf Mack stepped into her new role as artistic director of the famed New York City-based dance company in July 2025. After launching her career with Dance Theatre of Harlem at age seventeen, Mack carved a name for herself with Complexions Contemporary Ballet and Alonzo King LINES Ballet.



▼ **Dan Nadel**, *Curator, Drawings and Prints / Whitney Museum of American Art*

Celebrated author and critic Dan Nadel joined the team of New York’s Whitney Museum of American Art in August 2025, taking up the mantle of the Steven and Ann Ames Curator of Drawings and Prints. The announcement came in the lead-up to the opening of *Sixties Surreal*, a group exhibition that explored the influence of the surrealism movement on American art from 1958 to 1972.

► **Carlos Basualdo**, *Director / Nasher Sculpture Center*

Argentina-born curator Carlos Basualdo took the reins as director of the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, Texas, last spring. His decades-long career has included appointments as deputy director and chief curator at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, as well as a fellowship at the Center for Curatorial Leadership in New York. “I look forward to working with the team in Dallas to build on its remarkable legacy and shape a bold, dynamic future for the museum,” Basualdo said in a press release.



◀ **Jeremiah Matthew Davis**, *Director and CEO / San José Museum of Art*

After serving for nearly nine years at Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center in Oklahoma City, Jeremiah Matthew Davis joined the San José Museum of Art in San José, California, as its new Oshman director and CEO. “His energy, leadership experience, and knowledge of contemporary art are impressive,” says San Jose Museum of Art board co-president Wanda Kownacki. “We look forward to partnering with him to advance our mission of driving connections through socially relevant contemporary art.”



◀ **Jane Burke**, *Chief Curator and Art Director / RedLine Contemporary Arts Center*

Following stints as curator at Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art and curatorial fellow at the textile art and fashion department at the Denver Art Museum, Jane Burke brings more than two decades of experience in nonprofit arts administration as the first chief curator and art director at the RedLine Contemporary Arts Center in Denver, Colorado. She hopes the new position will help “expand and elevate our impact through experimentation, innovation, and collaboration.”



All photos provided unless otherwise noted.

► **Susan Peacock**, *Chief Impact Officer / Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and the Momentary*

Susan Peacock draws from more than two decades of experience in fundraising and government relations in her new role as chief impact officer at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and the Momentary in Bentonville, Arkansas. Her appointment was announced last summer ahead of the museum’s planned expansion by Safdie Architects, which will add 114,000 square feet of galleries, studios, dining options, event spaces, and more.



◄ **Megan Whittaker Nesbit**, *President and CEO / Philbrook Museum of Art*

Following “an extensive national search,” the board of trustees at the Philbrook Museum of Art promoted Megan Whittaker Nesbit to be its next president and CEO. Since joining the team at the iconic Tulsa, Oklahoma, museum and historical site in 2017, Nesbit paved the way for the construction of a new programming building through a \$50 million integrated capital campaign overseen in her previous position as deputy director of external affairs.



► **Hayley River Smith**, *Director / SCOPE Art Show*

Pivoting from her title as head of communications for SCOPE Art Show, Hayley River Smith serves as the first appointed director of the international contemporary art fair founded in 2002 by gallerist Alexis Hubshman. In an interview with Sotheby’s Institute, where Smith earned an MA in art business, she said her journey “has been about pushing the boundaries of traditional art platforms, enhancing accessibility for collectors, and supporting emerging artists and galleries.”



◄ **Anna Vittoria Pickett**, *Director of Exhibitions / Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center*

Anna Vittoria Pickett brings a wealth of experience in exhibition management and nonprofit leadership to her new position as director of exhibitions at Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center in Oklahoma City. Pickett’s work includes mentoring emerging artists, with a focus on programs for at-risk youth. The German-born artist previously served as director of education and development at Oklahoma City’s ARTSPACE at Untitled.



▲ **Trent Riley**, *Executive Director / Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center*

Trent Riley was named executive director of the Oklahoma City-based nonprofit arts center in 2024. With more than a decade of experience in leadership and development positions at museums and nonprofit cultural organizations, Riley helped generate more than \$30 million in revenue in less than a decade at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City.



MICHAŁ NOWAK

◀ **Chloé Dufresne**, *Music Director / Colorado Springs Philharmonic*

After cutting her teeth in the concert halls of Finland and Paris, Chloé Dufresne made waves Stateside in 2025 when she became the first woman director of the Colorado Springs Philharmonic in the orchestra’s nearly century-long history. The French-born musician, who studied voice at the Paris Opera, said in a press release that reaching new audiences is “the most important and fulfilling part of my work.”

▶ **Dr. Aimee Ng**, *Chief Curator / The Frick Collection*

The Frick Collection appointed Dr. Aimee Ng as its next Peter Jay Sharp Chief Curator in October 2025. Ng has been an instrumental member of the curatorial department since 2015. “Aimee is a remarkable colleague and scholar,” said Axel Rüger, the Frick’s Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen director, in a press release. “Her curatorial work is informed by her depth of knowledge, rigor, and exceptional ability to engage a wide range of audiences. It has been a joy working with her throughout our reopening and first year back at the Frick’s renovated home.”



SUSANNAH DOWELL



◀ **Max Shulman**, *Artistic Director / Theatreworks, Colorado Springs*

Former resident producing director at New York City’s Center for Jewish History, and a literary associate at Abingdon Theatre and Ensemble Studio Theatre, Max Shulman now serves as artistic director of Theatreworks in Colorado Springs. With the organization marking its fiftieth year in 2025, Shulman says the landmark season at the Ent Center for the Arts will “continue its legacy of artistic excellence and producing plays that challenge and inspire.”

▼ **Michael Slenske**, *Director / Untitled Art Fair Houston*

Los Angeles-based curator Michael Slenske served as the director of the first edition of Untitled Art in Houston in September 2025. The inaugural event was conceived as a boutique, invitation-only art fair designed to spotlight Houston’s vibrant art scene and culture. “Untitled Art is here to grow with Houston,” Slenske says. “Not just as a fair but as a long-term partner in a city full of momentum and vision.”



▼ **Barbara Lynne Jamison**, *Director and CEO / Opera Colorado*

Opera Colorado, in Englewood, Colorado, welcomed Barbara Lynne Jamison as its new director and CEO in August 2025. Jamison took the post after seven years with Kentucky Opera, where she previously served as director and CEO. Jamison also served on the executive leadership teams at Seattle Opera and the Metropolitan Opera Guild, and is an accomplished soprano, conductor, and educator. She aims to nurture the next generation of leaders as a mentor, and is an active speaker and panelist at local and national conventions and forums.



JOSEPH COSCIA JR

▲ **Axel Rüger**, *Director / The Frick Collection*

Following leadership appointments at the acclaimed Royal Academy of Arts in London and the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, Axel Ruger was appointed by the board of trustees of the Frick Collection as the museum’s next Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Director in spring 2025. His prior curatorial positions have included one at London’s National Gallery, where he was responsible for the collection of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dutch paintings.

▼ **Christine Vendredi**, *Executive Director / Palm Springs Art Museum*

Globally recognized arts leader Christine Vendredi was named as the JoAnn McGrath Executive Director of the Palm Springs Art Museum after serving as interim director of the museum for about six months. The board of trustees cited the curatorial expertise and global experience of Vendredi, who joined the institution as chief curator in April 2024, bringing more than twenty years of experience in curatorial leadership, cultural strategy, and museum operations. “I am honored to be leading such a unique institution that champions architecture, design, and the visual arts as essential parts of everyday life in the Coachella Valley and beyond,” Vendredi said in a press release. “I look forward to partnering with the staff, board, and community to ensure Palm Springs Art Museum remains a relevant and meaningful space for those seeking a retreat, a place to learn, or simply a moment of beauty and inspiration.”



Sold Out

The Smithfield Foods facility in northwest Oklahoma. Smithfield is owned by the WH Group, a Chinese food processing company headquartered in Hong Kong.

OKLAHOMA LAWMAKERS, CITING CONCERNS ABOUT CHINESE OWNERSHIP OF STATE FARMLAND, MOVED TO LIMIT FOREIGN HOLDINGS OF AGRICULTURAL PROPERTY—BUT NOT FOR ALL.

BY JUAN VASSALLO
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ZACH LUCERO

OKLAHOMA LAWMAKERS HAVE passed measures limiting foreign ownership of farmland in response to concerns about Chinese nationals and companies buying agricultural land in the state.

While approximately 4.3 percent of Oklahoma farmland is foreign-owned, according to the USDA's most recent filings, most of that is held by Canadian and European companies for renewable energy projects. Less than 1 percent of that share is Chinese.

Still, anti-China rhetoric has largely driven legislation, and a recent poll shows Republicans nationwide are concerned about Chinese ownership of U.S. farmland. Despite that concern, this new state legislation includes exemptions for Chinese-owned food supply companies.

The carve-outs specifically exempt Smithfield Foods, the only Chinese-owned

company with farmland in Oklahoma. Smithfield Foods, owned by China's WH Group, is not affected by the restrictions and continues to raise hogs on roughly 2,575 acres in northwest Oklahoma.

Oklahoma's restrictions mirror a broader national movement in mostly Republican states to curb foreign farmland ownership, driven by security concerns over countries the government deems "hostile." Yet, unlike states such as Arkansas, Oklahoma lawmakers have shown little interest in forcing Chinese-owned companies already operating in the state to divest or limit their ability to expand.

In 2023, Arkansas attorney general Tim Griffin ordered the agri-chemical firm Syngenta, owned by the Chinese conglomerate ChemChina, to sell its 160-acre research site and fined the company \$280,000. The move followed a new state law restricting foreign

investments from certain countries.

Arkansas governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders touted the decision during a press conference announcing the Trump Administration's National Farm Security Action Plan, a twelve-page outline aimed at "addressing the imperative for agriculture security in America."

"I'm so proud of the fact that Arkansas was the first state in the country to kick a Chinese-owned company off of our farmland and out of our state," Sanders said at the press conference in July. "And we made them pay for it. Very Trump-esque."

During the same press conference, Trump trade adviser Peter Navarro brought up Smithfield Foods, noting that after its purchase by the WH Group, it "now basically controls an eighth of the world's pork supply."

Counties where Smithfield operates in Oklahoma—Beaver, Harper, and Ellis—are



▲ Most foreign-owned land in Oklahoma is held by Canadian and European companies for renewable energy projects.

“
Smithfield
spent at least
\$1.58 million
on lobbying
and more
than \$90,000
in political
contributions
during the
2024 election
cycle.
”



▲ The entrance to Smithfield Foods in Oklahoma.

even highlighted on a map included in Trump’s plan. Neither the plan nor those involved in its rollout specified any steps they might take to force Smithfield to divest.

The Smithfield Exception

Oklahoma Senate Bill 212 expanded existing restrictions on foreign ownership of farmland. The law, which took effect in November 2023—around the same time Arkansas ordered Syngenta to divest—could have impacted Smithfield Foods’ operations in Oklahoma. But the following year, lawmakers added an exception: land-ownership restrictions do not apply to foreign companies that have an agreement with the Committee on Foreign Investment in the U.S. (CFIUS). CFIUS is an interagency committee that reviews foreign investments in American companies and real estate to see if they pose national security risks. It can approve, block, or require changes to deals to protect U.S. interests.

WH Group’s 2013 acquisition of Smithfield was cleared by CFIUS, effectively shielding it from Oklahoma’s foreign-ownership restrictions.

“We’re honoring the Constitution by those international corporations being vetted by the federal government,” says Oklahoma state senator Brent Howard, a Republican from Altus who introduced the legislation that shielded Smithfield.

Smithfield Foods has repeatedly rejected claims of “infiltration” of the U.S. pork industry by the Chinese Communist Party, emphasizing that it is managed by American executives.

“We currently own approximately 85,000 acres of farmland [in the U.S.], and that number has declined considerably since the 2013 WH Group acquisition,” says Ray Atkinson, a senior director at Smithfield Foods. “The farmland we own does not present a national security risk and represents less than 1/100th of 1 percent of all American farmland.”

Enforcement Remains Selective

During a September hearing at the Oklahoma State Capitol, a handful of lawmakers and state officials convened to discuss the perceived threat of the Chinese Communist Party in the state. Guest speakers at the hearing included Jan Jekielek, a journalist and editor for the far-right media outlet *The Epoch Times*, and Tom Rawlings, policy director of State Shield—both outspoken anti-China organizations.

Although the guest speakers provided no concrete examples of Chinese interference in state politics, they advocated for a state-level Foreign Agents Registration Act, which would require anyone acting on behalf of foreign governments to disclose their ties.

During his presentation, Brad Clark, general counsel with the Oklahoma attorney general’s office, turned the discussion to farmland. Clark explained how the new laws can bolster the state’s crackdown on illegal marijuana operations,



some of which are run by Chinese individuals.

After Oklahoma legalized medical marijuana in 2018, the industry has drawn an influx of out-of-state growers. Alongside that growth, there have been reports of labor exploitation and illegally operated farms, including some linked to Chinese organized crime.

Clark says the attorney general’s office currently has 150 pending cases involving illegal marijuana farms. But in an interview with *Investigate Midwest* he did not specify if any of those cases involve Chinese nationals or illegally owned farmland, citing the ongoing nature of the investigations.

The office says it has no closed cases related to illicit land use.

Absent from the discussion was Smithfield Foods, the only Chinese-owned company that has lobbied state officials nationwide while also owning farmland in Oklahoma.

In 2024 and 2025, Smithfield spent at least \$1.58 million on lobbying and more than \$90,000 in political contributions during the 2024 election cycle. The company is represented on the board of the Oklahoma Pork Council, a trade group with registered lobbyists.

During the hearing, Howard asked Clark whether S.B. 212 has forced any foreign companies in Oklahoma to divest.

“We received questions early on from corporations on mergers and acquisitions as they were going through those processes and came to the realization that S.B. 212 was taking effect soon,” Clark said, in response. “[They] needed to restructure that merger, that acquisition, so it’s highly likely that [divestment] has been involved.”

The attorney general’s office declined to answer *Investigate Midwest’s* questions about which corporations altered or abandoned their merger or acquisition plans, or answer specific questions about Smithfield Foods and potential divestment.

“The attorney general is against and will fight any individual or entity that exploits Oklahoma jobs to foreign nationalists or others who are not Oklahomans,” Clark says. “And that would certainly include foreign adversaries like China.”

Clark also noted that no one from the Trump administration has yet reached out to the attorney general’s office to work on the National Farm Security Action Plan, the administration’s report that highlights the counties where Smithfield Foods operates in the state.

Oklahoma governor Kevin Stitt and other Republican members of the state’s congressional delegation have been vocal about what they see as the threat from China and the need to restrict foreign ownership of farmland. Last year, Stitt issued an executive order aimed at reducing Oklahoma’s exposure to the Chinese Communist Party.

On the federal level, Senator James Lankford of Oklahoma introduced the bipartisan Security and Oversight of International Landholdings (SOIL) Act of 2025, calling for mandatory CFIUS review of foreign agricultural land purchases. Oklahoma’s U.S. representative Frank Lucas introduced the Agricultural Risk Review Act of 2025, which would make the secretary of agriculture a permanent member of CFIUS.

Stitt’s executive order, which directs the state’s retirement system to divest from foreign adversary countries like China, makes no mention of Smithfield Foods and potential divestment, and the bills introduced by Lankford and Lucas earlier this year are pending in Congress.

Stitt, Lankford, and Lucas did not respond to requests for comment.

Although Trump’s National Farm Security Action Plan emphasizes protecting the country’s farmland, it also calls for efforts to “strengthen domestic agricultural productivity.”

Smithfield Foods controls an estimated 23 percent of the U.S. pork market, while JBS, a Brazilian conglomerate, holds a similar share of the U.S. beef supply—a fact that was pointed out by Kansas senator Roger Marshall during the plan’s launch.

Both JBS and Smithfield went public this year, a move that could help them expand operations and further solidify their presence in the U.S. food system.

Despite introducing legislation across the country to restrict foreign ownership of farmland, lawmakers do not appear motivated to target companies like JBS or Smithfield, or to bring more of the food-supply chain under domestic control.

A study from Michigan State University analyzed 143 bills aimed at restricting foreign ownership of agricultural land, introduced across thirty-four states, along with the actions of more than 6,700 state legislators. Despite China’s nominal makeup of total farmland in the state and across the country, the researchers found that fear and skepticism about Chinese influence in the U.S. is what continues to drive the legislation.

“Of all the farmland that’s owned by foreigners, Chinese entities have a stake in less than 1 percent of that,” says Dr. David Ortega, a professor of food economics and policy at Michigan State University and one of the study’s authors. “We are targeting interests from specific countries that can lead to rises in xenophobia and discrimination.” 🚩

This story was produced in partnership with the nonprofit newsroom *Investigate Midwest*, a grantee of Kirkpatrick Foundation.

Step Into the Light

BY KELLY ROGERS



© ANTHONY MCCALL PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF © TATE

◀ Anthony McCall: *Solid Light* at Tate Modern in London, England

IN 1973, BRITISH artist Anthony McCall opened new possibilities for the world of sculpture with his interactive installation *Line Describing a Cone*. In this work, a projector at one end of the room beams light through an ethereal haze, materializing as a bright white circle on the wall. From there, it's the viewer's job to activate the work by stepping into the light.

This spring, Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center presents McCall's work in collaboration with Tate Modern in *Anthony McCall: Solid Light*, marking the North American debut of the exhibition.

Oklahoma Contemporary's executive director Trent Riley says this landmark exhibition affirms that Oklahoma is part of the global conversation in contemporary art.

"For our community, this is an opportunity to encounter a world-class experience right here at home," Riley says. "One that will spark curiosity, invite exploration, and inspire new ways of thinking about the connections between art, science, and design."

In addition to the artist's solid light installations, the exhibition features rare archival materials, including photographs and early performance films. These

materials provide a comprehensive look at McCall's practice and his history with light, film, movement, and installation. McCall also created films of visitors interacting with his solid light sculptures, combining his interests in film as a medium, a vehicle, and a tool for art.

In 2004, he said of his solid light sculpture: "To fully see the emerging form, it is necessary to move around and through it, to look at it from the inside and the outside." ✕

Anthony McCall: *Solid Light* will be on view at Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center's Eleanor Kirkpatrick Main Gallery, March 13–July 27, 2026.



RSVP

SOCIALIZING IS AN ARTFORM, TOO

Here and Now

ArtNow 2025: Materials and Boundaries opened on September 18, 2025, at Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center. Organized by independent curator **Alexa Goetzinger** with guest curatorial assistant **Virginia Sitzes**, the 2025 edition of the biennial group exhibition highlights new and recent art from twenty-five Oklahoma artists. *Materials and Boundaries* features work by artists with deep Oklahoma ties. The opening reception included music by DJ **YuchiBoy** and DJ **Kora Waves**, projections by **Brainbox Designs**, a photo booth by the **Booth**, and a silent auction.
► **Oklahoma City**



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: *ArtNow* artist **Behnaz Sohrabian**; Dr. **Dan Molina** and **Amanda Rodriguez**; **Yatika Fields** and **Lindsay Aveilhé**; **Monique Short**, **Erica Emery**, and **Justin Brannon**

Voices of Reason

Audiences got a behind the scenes look at the career of one of public radio's most recognizable voices, Mary Louise Kelly. The award winning journalist and co-host of National Public Radio's *All Things Considered* sat down with Rachel Hubbard, executive director of KOSU for an ArtDesk Conversation. The event took place on November 4, 2025, at the Oklahoma City Community College Visual and Performing Arts Center Theater, where Kelly shared insights from her decades-spanning career covering politics and world affairs.
► **Oklahoma City**



The Big Art

Untitled Art expanded to Houston, Texas, with its inaugural edition from September 19–21, 2025, at the George R. Brown Convention Center. During its four-day run, the fair debuted to significant sales, enterprising programming, and high attendance, including established collectors, museum trustees, board members, artists, arts professionals, and cultural enthusiasts from across Texas, the United States, and internationally. ▶ **Houston, Texas**



Friend Zone

Friends of the Upper East Side, one of New York's leading preservation organizations for more than forty years, honored **Christian Keesee** and **Larry Keigwin** with the 2025 Ambassador of the Upper East Side award during a fundraising dinner on September 30, 2025, at the Metropolitan Club. Keesee, chairman of Kirkpatrick Foundation and publisher of *ArtDesk* magazine, and Keigwin, a choreographer, artistic director and dance editor of *ArtDesk*, were recognized for their contributions to the arts, culture, and preservation in New York, and Mr. Keesee's fourteen years of service on the organization's board of directors. ▶ **New York**



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: **Christian Keesee** and **Larry Keigwin**; **Emily Frick**; **Brette** and **CJ Haynes-Dale**; **Susan Gutfreund** and **Christian Keesee**; **Nina Lord**, **Buck Marshall**, **Jennifer Van Beek**, **Henry Steer**, **Josie Blair**, **Kate Caputo Steer**, **Alexander Howard**, **Jeremy Weltmer**, **Emily Marshall**, and **Edward Lord**

Founding Festivities

Arts advocates, patrons, and supporters of the Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center gathered to honor the organization's most dedicated community members at a Founders Reception on September 23, 2025. Hosted at the home of Oklahoma Contemporary founder and chairman **Christian Keesee** and featuring a backdrop of *Cloud City* by **Tomás Saraceno**, attendees celebrated the organization's efforts to make the arts accessible to all through education, exhibitions, and performance. ▶ **Oklahoma City**



Clockwise from top row, left: **Kelley Barnes** and **Shannon Presti**; **Chuck Thompson**, **Jill Simpson**, and **Beau Jennings**; **Melissa Scaramucci**; **Erica Amos** and **Noah Williams**; Oklahoma City's mayor **David Holt**, **Chelsea Abney**, **Vickie Behenna**, **Stefani Heller**, and **Sam Wargin Grimaldo**; **Rowdy Gilbert**, **Linda** and **Steve Slawson**; **Oliver Ellington**, **Anna Vittoria Pickett**, and **Taylor Geldart**; **John Garrison**, and **Chuck Garrett**; **Jonathan** and **Latisha Heinlen**, **Todd Edmonds**, **Becky Edmonds**, **Emma** and **Blake Cherry**, and **Travis Mason**.



Golden Hours

To take advantage of the beautiful autumnal weather that Colorado's Front Range has to offer, Green Box hosted its annual donor party on October 19, 2025. The evening began with a reception at the new Horse Wellness Meadow, where guests mingled with humans and equines. The group of nearly 150 Green Box supporters then moved to the Green Box Studio at Sallie Bush Community Center, where executive director Scott RC Levy, provided a sneak preview of 2026 programming. The evening concluded with a performance by FLOCK Danceworks, which recently completed a month-long artist residency. ▶ **Green Mountain Falls, Colorado**



Clockwise from left: **FLOCK Danceworks** capping off the event with a performance; Mingling in the barn; **John Brandon**, manager of the Horse Wellness Meadow; **John Bell**, **Carla Chapman**, and **Shawn** and **Rev. Dr. Robin Meyers**; **Alice Klock** and **Florian Lochner** of FLOCK Danceworks; **Marc Kipp**, **LaDonna Reed**, **Kimberly Gold**, and **Ishmael Whitney**.

Post Script

In Oklahoma City University’s Hulsey Art Gallery, *Obscured Image*, was on view through November 20, 2025. The exhibition was a showcase of the dialogue between light and perception through the lenses of world-renowned artist **Olafur Eliasson** and contemporary artist **Andy Mattern**, accompanied by a musical performance series by **Onyx Lane**. On November 13, 2025, an immersive spatial sound installation was presented alongside Eliasson’s sculpture.

► **Oklahoma City**



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Contributors



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ZACH LUCERO | is a commercial cinematographer and photographer based in Oklahoma City, known for crafting stories that connect on a human level. His work spans branded films, television commercials, documentaries, and drone cinematography. He also has a background in audio engineering and sound design. Cunningham’s work.



JUAN VASSALLO | covers agribusiness and the meat industry in Oklahoma for non-profit news outlet *Investigate Midwest*. Vassallo brings his investigative and data expertise to report on the economic, environmental, and regulatory challenges shaping the meat industry. He holds a master’s degree in investigative journalism from Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism.

FROM THE EDITORS: In November, *ArtDesk* sponsored an ArtDesk Conversation with Mary Louise Kelly, host of *All Things Considered* on National Public Radio, and Rachel Hubbard, executive director of KOSU, the NPR affiliate in central Oklahoma. In her opening remarks, Kirkpatrick Foundation’s executive director Kelley Barnes said, “As media corporations continue to consolidate, eroding the independent voices of writers and reporters, strengthening local, regional, and national reporting is more important than ever.” We could not agree more. Please continue to support media outlets whose primary mission is public service with a commitment to avoiding political and commercial influence.

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DEDICATION

This issue is dedicated to Agnes Gund (1938–2025) a lifelong advocate for contemporary art, social justice, and philanthropy.

OUR MISSION

ArtDesk is a free, quarterly print and online publication devoted to contemporary arts, performance, and thought. We inform by focusing on regional and national events, exhibitions, and education, promoting creative literacy and art appreciation.



CONTACT US

Please direct letters to: editor@readartdesk.com or Editor, c/o *ArtDesk*, 1001 West Wilshire Boulevard, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73116.



Where the Story Lives

“My favorite part of my job is actually standing up from my desk and getting out to report in the field. So around my desk in the newsroom, you’ll find all kinds of stuff I’ve carried home from far-flung assignments: North Korean propaganda posters, a poster from a Russian election watchdog group, a sign from a protest in Tehran. They remind me there’s a big world out there, and to keep being curious about it.”

—MARY LOUISE KELLY

Since 2018, **Mary Louise Kelly** has anchored *All Things Considered* on National Public Radio. Throughout her career she has worked as a foreign correspondent, reporting from war zones and many far-flung locales. In 2004 she created NPR’s intelligence beat, reporting on the CIA and NSA in the wake of the September 11 attacks. Kelly is the author of two novels *Anonymous Sources* and *The Bullet*, and a memoir *It Goes So Fast.: The Year of No Do-Overs*.



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Sanford Biggers, Untitled (2022), New York, aluminum and rhinestones, 2022, courtesy of the artist and Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York and Aspen