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ARTDESK

CONTEMPORARY ARTS, PERFORMANCE, AND THOUGHT | SUMMER 2025

VLADIMIR KANEVSKY

Cascading Roses (2024–25)

Kanevsky's lifelike flower sculptures are on view at
The Frick Collection in New York through October 6, 2025.



Lining Up

SARAH WRIGHT'S ART JOURNEY COMES TO GREEN BOX ARTS FESTIVAL

By Jezy J. Gray



DAVID LAUER

◀ Sarah Wright in her Colorado Springs home and studio.

FOR VISUAL ARTIST Sarah Wright, the winding path of her practice began with a love for Color Field painters like Mark Rothko and Helen Frankenthaler. Since realigning her creative energy during the pandemic, Wright has built a reputation for landscapes in her adopted home of Colorado Springs, Colorado, where she recreates scenes from her travels in abstract snapshots with deep colors and strong lines. *ArtDesk* spoke with Wright ahead of her debut on the Lake Street Display at this summer's Green Box Arts Festival in Green Mountain Falls, Colorado.

How did you develop your art practice?

Art was always my favorite subject in school—if there was an art class, I took it. It wasn't until college that it became apparent it could actually be something I could do as a career. I had really great professors who were also painters, and I graduated from Randolph College in Virginia with a degree in studio art.

I moved back to Oklahoma City, and I painted a little bit and worked for an arts nonprofit. Then I got married, moved away, had kids, and that sort of fell into the background a little bit. I would paint here and there for little things but not necessarily as a full practice.

When did you get serious about painting again?

During the pandemic we were all just huddled indoors, and I was faced with a big life change. I got all my paintbrushes and bought some canvas and started painting again. I realized how much I had missed it

and how much I had to say. I painted one painting after another and another. I thought, "Let's see where this takes me."

How have the places you've called home imprinted themselves on your work?

Colorado is just amazing: waterfalls, rock formations, and a variety of landscapes. Oklahoma was also a big inspiration for me, with its incredible sunsets and bucolic rolling plains. It had an impression on me, but I didn't realize I would take that and make it into art.

I'll go out and I'll visit waterfalls and different types of landscapes in Colorado, and come back with those memories and start painting them. I start creating this impression of that space and how I felt about it. I use a lot of color to guide me and how I'm feeling.

When did you know abstraction was how you wanted to capture those scenes and memories?

I jumped into abstraction very early. I was drawn to abstract expressionists, the Color Field painters. I just love how they really pushed the envelope and took painting to another place. I thought, "Look what you can do." It's important to learn how to draw correctly, but once you have it down, for me it was like, "Where can I go next?" Abstraction gave me this freedom, and it was exciting—and you didn't have to worry about making it look exactly like the actual place.

How has your practice changed from when you first began painting?

When I was in undergrad, it was very celestial: My brushstrokes are very expressive and free-flowing. When I started painting again, I used tape to get that sharp line. It kind of gave me the structure I needed to be expressive in these bold colors. It really kind of excited me, and I just kept going with that.

What can we expect from your work on the Lake Street Display at the Green Box Arts Festival?

It's called *Sunset at Gazebo Lake*. I recreated a scene from around that lake. I just wanted to recreate that beautiful feeling of sitting there watching the sunset. It's a bit heightened, but that's what I do. I wanted to have something very vibrant—and, you know, who doesn't love to sit around and watch a sunset?



HONOR SONG GOES OUTDOORS AT
OKLAHOMA CONTEMPORARY

OUTSIDE VOICE

BY ALLISON MEIER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MEL WILLIS

IN 1981, AFTER living on the East Coast and in Europe, Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds left behind what many consider the world's cultural hubs for Oklahoma tribal and ancestral lands. There he started a daily painting practice that became the *Neuf* series, referencing the Cheyenne word for meaning and ritual around the number four. The vibrant acrylic shapes with serrated edges were inspired by the wooded canyons around his mother's home. *Neufs for Oklahoma Autumn*, the latest in this series, is monumental—two half-size, hand-painted basketball courts—

and open to the public alongside his *Honor Song* retrospective at Oklahoma Contemporary which includes several outdoor installations of his work.

"The paintings came before the public art because that's where I found my own comfort zone with abstraction," Heap of Birds says. "Living on the land for ten years in seclusion on top of this canyon, that led to having the strength to speak out in more of a politicized way because it came from the sovereign land."

The courts, with their sunset hues, have backboards that are part of his long-running *Native Hosts* series, recognizing



Neufs for Oklahoma Autumn (2025)

tribes that have historically lived in the area, with its current name printed in reverse. Nearby is a circle of forty of these signs for Oklahoma's thirty-nine tribal nations (with Cheyenne and Arapaho, of which he is a citizen, represented individually).

"This is our first-ever campus-wide retrospective exhibition for an artist," says director of exhibitions AnnaVittoria Pickett. "It has the narrative of his career and Edgar as a collaborator, teacher, and somebody who likes to share with the community. The basketball courts do all of those things."

Acting as a scoreboard is a re-creation of one of his earliest projects using public art messages to confront colonization, created in 1982 for Times Square's Spectacolor light board. At the museum entrances are his *Trail of Tears* signs, where seemingly ordinary steel parking signs commemorate this forced displacement.

Although these installations all have Heap of Birds' evocative use of language and material, always challenging expectations for Indigenous contemporary art, they also reflect his personal passion for gathering,

particularly through games of basketball.

"He loves what it does for the community in bringing people together," Pickett says. "And he is essentially gifting the courts to the community for the next year to use for free whenever they want. It has a lot to do with what Edgar's practice is about, which is truly standing up for underserved and underrepresented communities, but also being himself and not wanting to be put into a box."

Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds: Neufs for Oklahoma Autumn will be on view at Campbell Art Park in Oklahoma City through April 13, 2026.



Native Hosts (2025)

DOSSIER

Summer Musings by Christian Keesee
Questions? Comments? DM me @christian.keesee



SPINNING A YARN ◀
As a collector of fabrics and textiles as art, I'm excited by **Morii Design**. This dynamic India-based studio is rooted in a deep respect for Indian craftsmanship and a love for contemporary design, bridging tradition and modernity.



SWAN SONG ◀
Gillian Murphy, the prima ballerina with American Ballet Theatre, is retiring after twenty-nine years with the company. Her final performance will be as Odette/Odile in Kevin McKenzie's version of *Swan Lake* on July 18, 2025, at the Metropolitan Opera House. She joined ABT in 1996 and was promoted to principal dancer in 2002. Congratulations, Gillian. Thank you for giving so much for so long. We'll miss seeing you brighten each performance with your incredible skill, technique, and warmth.



BULLS WITH RIGHTS ▲
Mexico City is many things: one of the largest cities in the world, an important Catholic stronghold (with abortion rights), a vibrant cultural capital, one of the most affirming cities for women—and the largest bullfighting city in the world. After years of back and forth, Mexico City lawmakers overwhelmingly voted to ban traditional bullfighting. This move was supported by **Claudia Sheinbaum**, Mexico's first female president.



THOUGHT BUBBLE ▶
China opened more than 1,000 new museums in the last ten years, many of which celebrate China's culture and history. In the United States, many museums are in peril due to momentum lost from Covid-19 shutdowns and insufficient funding from private individuals and foundations. Now government support is being cut. While other countries are making sure their unique cultures endure, are we pulling the carpet out from under ourselves?



SAY HOWDY ▲
It's official! Oklahoma City will be the secondary host city for the 2028 Summer Olympics. Canoe slalom and softball are on the menu. While Los Angeles is the primary host city, Oklahoma City is proud to be the secondary host for talented athletes from around the world. Time to grab your cowboy hat and come discover all the fun everyone has been talking about...



SELECTS FROM THE SALON ▲
Sargent and Paris at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York explores the early days of American painter **John Singer Sargent**'s career as an art student in Paris through the mid-1880s, when his infamous portrait *Madame X* was both scandalous and a sweeping success. This iconic painting—a highlight of the Met's collection—will be displayed alongside Sargent's sketches and selected portraits of her fellow Parisiennes.

BRAVO! ◀
Wes Gordon is hitting all the right notes at **Carolina Herrera**.

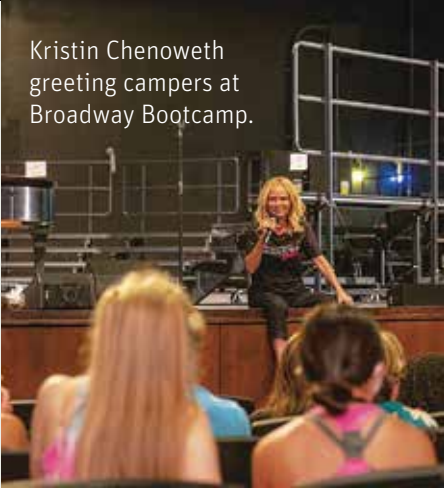


BOUNCING BACK ▲
Worldwide art museum attendance in 2024 shows great strides post-pandemic. Almost back.

Musée du Louvre, Paris	8,737,000
Vatican Museums, Rome	6,825,000
British Museum, London	6,500,000
National Museum of China, Beijing	6,300,000
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York	5,727,000
Tate Modern, London	4,603,000
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.	3,936,000
National Museum of Korea, Seoul	3,788,000
Musée d'Orsay, Paris	3,751,000
Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City	3,700,000

Baby's First Broadway

THIS SUMMER TALENTED high schoolers from around the world will flock to Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, to participate in Kristin Chenoweth's Broadway Bootcamp at the Broken Arrow Performing Arts Center. Dedicated to transforming young lives through the arts, KCBBC hosts aspiring young artists for eleven days of collaboration and hands-on learning with Chenoweth and her team of leading Broadway professionals. Kim Vento, director of the BAPAC, says the camp has grown from a master





AMANDA TIPTON

◀ Artists of the Colorado Ballet in performance

COLORADO BALLET

MOUNTAIN STEPS

JENNIFER GRACE remembers the moment she decided to become a ballet dancer.

A restless little girl in a small Montana town, Grace was “one of those kids that just cannot sit still,” she says. That is, until the day her attention froze on a full-length production of *Romeo and Juliet* being broadcast on PBS.

“I sat like a statue that entire time,” says Grace. “So much so that my mother was actually concerned,” she laughs. Grace says she still remembers the touch of the couch and the way her feet tingled. “I knew then and there,” she says.

Grace is now a principal dancer for Colorado Ballet, where she’s wrapping up her

fourth season. The company, established in 1961, is under the artistic direction of Gil Boggs, who structures the five-show seasons according to a loose formula, as inviting to curious newcomers as it is interesting to discerning connoisseurs.

For the 2025–2026 season, they will start with a classical work in the fall, *Dracula*, then move straight into *The Nutcracker*—“Everyone expects *The Nutcracker*,” says Boggs. After that it’s a lesser-known ballet like *Casanova*, which was performed in January, and *The Great Gatsby*, on the bill for next season, followed by a family-friendly production to help “develop the audience,” says Boggs. For the upcoming

season that will be a refreshed rendition of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, with new sets and costumes.

Every season closes with the annual repertoire production, “MasterWorks,” ranging from well-loved neoclassical numbers to exciting world premieres. “It’s basically a bucket list of ballets that the dancers want to dance,” says Boggs.

Next season’s “MasterWorks” show will include the world premiere of a work by Yoshihisa Arai, the accomplished, Cincinnati-based choreographer commissioned by Colorado Ballet.

Arai has worked with the company on a “MasterWorks” production before, having

choreographed its 2024 piece, *Bolero*. The new work will be created this summer during a three-week residency in Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, in conjunction with the Green Box Arts Festival. Attendees to the festival in June and July will be treated to excerpts from the new work as it develops, before its world premiere in March 2026.

“Working with Yoshi again is going to be fantastic,” says Grace, who starred in *Bolero*. “I can’t wait to see what he comes up with, how far he pushes us as dancers.” —PARKER YAMASAKI

Colorado Ballet will perform its repertoire and excerpts of new work at the 2025 Green Box Arts Festival.

class with ten kids into a one-of-a-kind creative arts camp with international reach. “We believe it to be the premier musical theater camp in the country that not only brings A-list Broadway professionals to teach our campers but also has a mission to guide and support our campers’ artistic journey with a safe space to create, experiment, and thrive,” Vento says.

Auditioning students must submit virtual applications of their vocal, dance, and dramatic skills for the chance to participate in intensive hands-on learning



Campers performing at the end of the week.

with professionals in acting, dance, staging, and singing. Made possible by the Kristin Chenoweth Arts & Education Fund, the camp will celebrate its tenth anniversary this summer.

Vento says the camp has also had an uplifting impact in the local community. Another program included in the camp is Stars on Stage, a program in which students with developmental disabilities and student peers collaborate to produce a fully staged theatrical production. “Everyone deserves access to the arts,” Vento says. “Together we create a

community, brought together via the arts, to foster a culture of acceptance that lasts a lifetime.”

The camp wraps up with a student-faculty performance called the Kristi Awards, a production to showcase what the students have learned. The event is free and open to the public, with tickets acquired via the BAPAC box office. —ANN MAGNER

This summer’s Kristin Chenoweth’s Broadway Bootcamp will take place July 16–26, 2025, at the Broken Arrow Performing Arts Center in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma.



SUN COUNTRY

THIS MAJOR TOURING show on the Venezuelan American artist Marisol Escobar—best known as just **Marisol**—makes its final stop in Dallas. Although a major figure of 1960s Pop Art for her mixed-media totemic sculptures, she was overlooked compared to her male peers in the subsequent decades before she died in 2016 and left her entire estate to the Buffalo AKG Art Museum, which organized this survey.

Works from across her career are on display, from her large-scale wooden sculptures to archival material contextualizing how she borrowed from both folk art and pop culture.
—ALLISON MEIER

Marisol: A Retrospective will be on view at the Dallas Museum of Art through July 6, 2025. ▶ [dma.org](https://www.dma.org)

Mi Mama y Yo (1968)



JOSEPH COSCIA JR.

VLADIMIR KANEVSKY
Cascading Roses (2024–2025), installed in the
Fragonard Room of The Frick Collection



JOSEPH COSCIA JR.

VLADIMIR KANEVSKY
Detail of *Lemon Tree*
(2024–2025)

WHAT'S OLD IS NEW AGAIN HISTORY HOUSE

VLADIMIR KANEVSKY
Camellia Branches
(2024–2025)



JOSEPH COSCIA JR.

their own prior performances in the space.

The Frick celebrates its collection creatively in many ways. One prime example: its diptych series of books, pairing curators' remarks on permanent holdings with responses from modern creators.

In this restoration, the Frick's stewards not only went to such lengths as commissioning textiles from the same firms that made them more than a century ago; they also commissioned sculptor Vladimir Kanevsky to create porcelain bouquets to echo the fresh

bouquets that filled the galleries when the museum first opened in 1935. Kanevsky's work is breathtaking, and each piece suits its relationship to the Gilded Age interiors and the fine and decorative arts the Frick is known for.

The \$330 million renovation—designed by Selldorf Architects with Beyer Blinder Belle Architects and Planners serving as executive architect—represents the first comprehensive upgrade in ninety years to the former home of industrialist and art collector Henry Clay Frick. It also gives visitors unprecedented access to the second-story family rooms, which have served as staff meeting rooms and administrative offices for decades.

The former living quarters highlight the personal collecting interests of Frick; his wife, Adelaide Childs; and their daughter, Helen Clay Frick. The new exhibition spaces have also made way for Frick holdings that are the most significant of their kind, some of which have not been regularly displayed in the past. These more recent donations and acquisitions include French faience, Viennese Du Paquier porcelain, rare portrait medals, and clocks and watches.

After reveling in the splendor of the Frick's grand and intimate exhibit halls, visitors will soon be able to conclude their stay with a stop in the Frick's new café. Additional views onto the 70th Street Garden from throughout the museum provide visitors a complete experience. The work on the garden restored landscape architect Russell Page's 1977 vision.

Axel Rüger, who was named the Frick's director in March, celebrated the Frick's trajectory, saying, "We welcome visitors to rediscover the beauty, intimacy, and scholarship that have defined the Frick for nearly a century and that we hope will inspire generations of visitors to come." —CHRISTIAN KEESEE

Christian Keese is a member of the Frick Collection Board of Trustees. Currently on view, Porcelain Garden: Vladimir Kanevsky at the Frick Collection will be displayed through October 6, 2025.

THE GRAND DAME of New York's Upper East Side has reopened her Beaux-Arts doors to an adoring public. After four years of restoration and expansion, the Frick Collection has debuted what were once second-story family rooms as exhibition spaces; restored Old Masters to their first-floor glory; added an intimate subterranean auditorium, purpose-built education rooms, and conservation studios; and connected the museum to the Frick Art Research Library.

She's back, baby, and she has opened with a splash.

The Frick revived its musical tradition with a festival of intimate concerts by emerging talent and esteemed international artists, who responded to the collection's artwork and



NICHOLAS VENEZIA

The Frick Collection's
entrance on Fifth Avenue

The BOOK REPORT

BY ALANA RUIZ DE LA PEÑA | PHOTOGRAPHY BY BAILEY WALKER

Hokusai’s Method

Kyoko Wada and Ryoko Matsuba, \$45
Japanese printmaker Katsushika Hokusai is best known for his iconic block print, *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*. What is less apparent is that the prolific Edo-period artist was also the author of drawing manuals. These manuals were designed as an artist’s reference for drawing flora, fauna, people, and scenery. *Hokusai’s Method* is a compendium of these guides, each page reproduced as it appeared in the early nineteenth century.

The Synthetic Eye: Photography Transformed in the Age of AI

Fred Ritchin, \$30
In the year after photography was invented, the painter Paul Delaroche declared, “Painting is dead.” Now, just as artificial intelligence is suddenly ubiquitous, there are similar declarations of disruption from all areas of the humanities. Fred Ritchin’s book explores the questions of computer-generated images. Could it supplement the world of photography, or is this the dawn of the modern downfall of art-making?

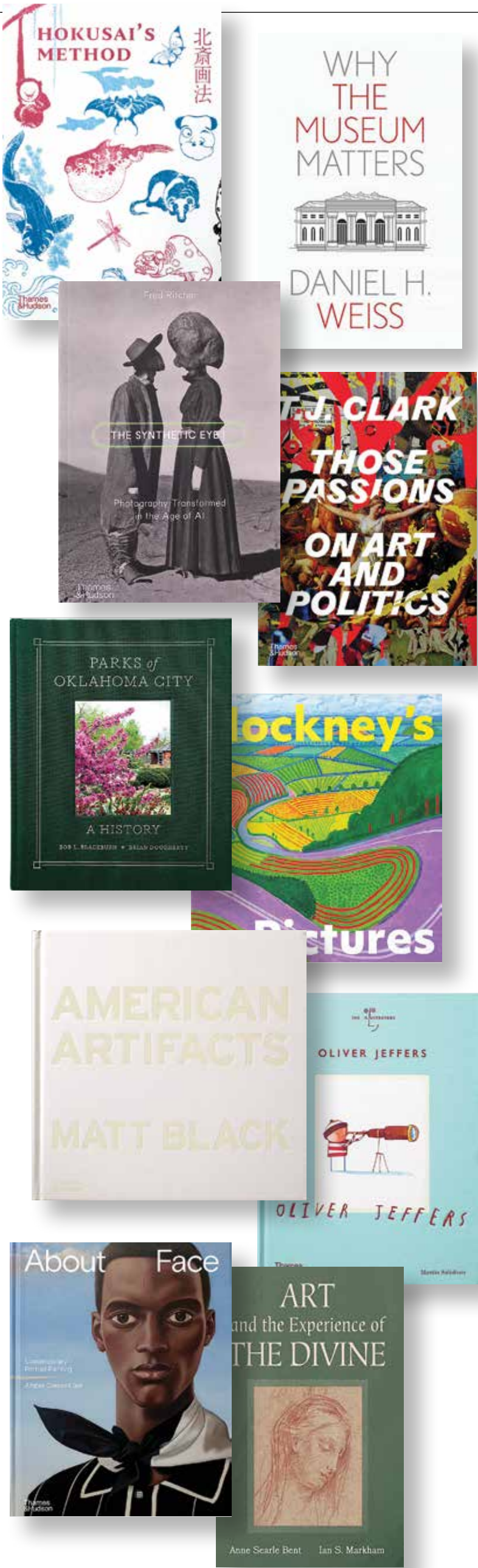
Parks of Oklahoma City: A History
Bob Blackburn and Brian Dougherty, \$40
From the understated suburban meadow of Grand Boulevard to the sprawling Scissortail Park downtown, green spaces abound in Oklahoma City. Co-written by Oklahoma historian Bob Blackburn and OKC park expert and landscape architect Brian Dougherty, this book showcases the planning, pioneers, native plants, and impact that a space dedicated to nature can have on a city.

American Artifacts
Matt Black, \$60

Photographer Matt Black has spent the better part of a decade traversing the U.S. to areas that are designated in the U.S. Census as “concentrated poverty.” As of 2023, roughly 40 million Americans lived in poverty. Throughout his travels, Black amassed a collection of objects that span from the ephemeral, like lottery tickets and lighters, to the priceless—family photos and letters. These items document the often-overlooked parts of this country.

About Face: Contemporary Portrait Painting

Amber Creswell Bell, \$50
A staple genre of painting, the portrait is a powerful way to make a statement and a unique way to preserve history. *About Face* chronicles the early- to-mid career artists whose art-making revolves around people and faces, even when it verges on the realm of abstraction. This evolution reflects the cultural shift to convey character through creative narrative, dispensing with depictions of traditional likeness. Curator and author Amber Creswell Bell’s survey reveals that one portrait can depict much more than a single identity.



Why The Museum Matters

Daniel H. Weiss, \$18
The world is changing quickly, and we all need to evolve to keep up—arts institutions are no exception. Author Daniel H. Weiss is a professor of the humanities at Johns Hopkins University and president emeritus of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In this slim but substantial book, Weiss expounds on the past, present, and future of the art museum.

Those Passions: On Art and Politics
TJ Clark, \$50

This collection of essays by British art historian and writer TJ Clark was twenty-five years in the making. Clark’s prolific writings on the connection between art and politics have been instrumental in shaping art history as we know it today, drawing connections between the Old Masters and contemporary artists. Clark examines what place—if any—politics should have in art and whether that changes how we judge the art. Case studies across centuries provoke an examination of art-making in today’s capitalist society.

Hockney’s Pictures
David Hockney, \$50

Hockney’s Pictures is a sweeping retrospective of the works of this prolific artist. However, he has accomplished so much more than his paintings. An early adopter of technology, the octogenarian used his iPad for plein-air sessions at Yosemite National Park and for designing a stained-glass window at Westminster Abbey. In 1979 he co-founded Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and in 1999 he proposed the Hockney-Falco thesis, arguing that the Renaissance paintings of the 1400s were completed with the aid of camera obscuras and camera lucidas. As an artist, he has explored work in paint, printmaking, stage design, and photography and was an important Pop Art contributor in the 1960s. Hockney’s vivid work springs off the pages of this richly visual volume.

Oliver Jeffers
Martin Salisbury, \$30

The title of this book will pique the interest of any adult who has tirelessly read book after book at bedtime. Many of us can name our favorite Oliver Jeffers title (*The Day the Crayons Quit* is a modern classic). His distinct drawing and lettering style, in addition to his clever word-smithing, have garnered him inclusion in Thames & Hudson’s series of “The Illustrators,” a collection of iconic book illustrators such as Ludwig Bemelmens and Dick Bruna.

Art and the Experience of the Divine
Anne Searle Bent and Ian S. Markham, \$24

It’s not uncommon to have something of a religious experience when stumbling across a masterpiece in an arts institution. Professor Ian Markham is the dean and president of Virginia Theological Seminary and the president of the General Theological Seminary in New York. He argues that art is a way to connect with the spiritual realm. Co-author Anne Searle Bent has taught numerous courses on art and faith at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Lake Forest, Illinois.



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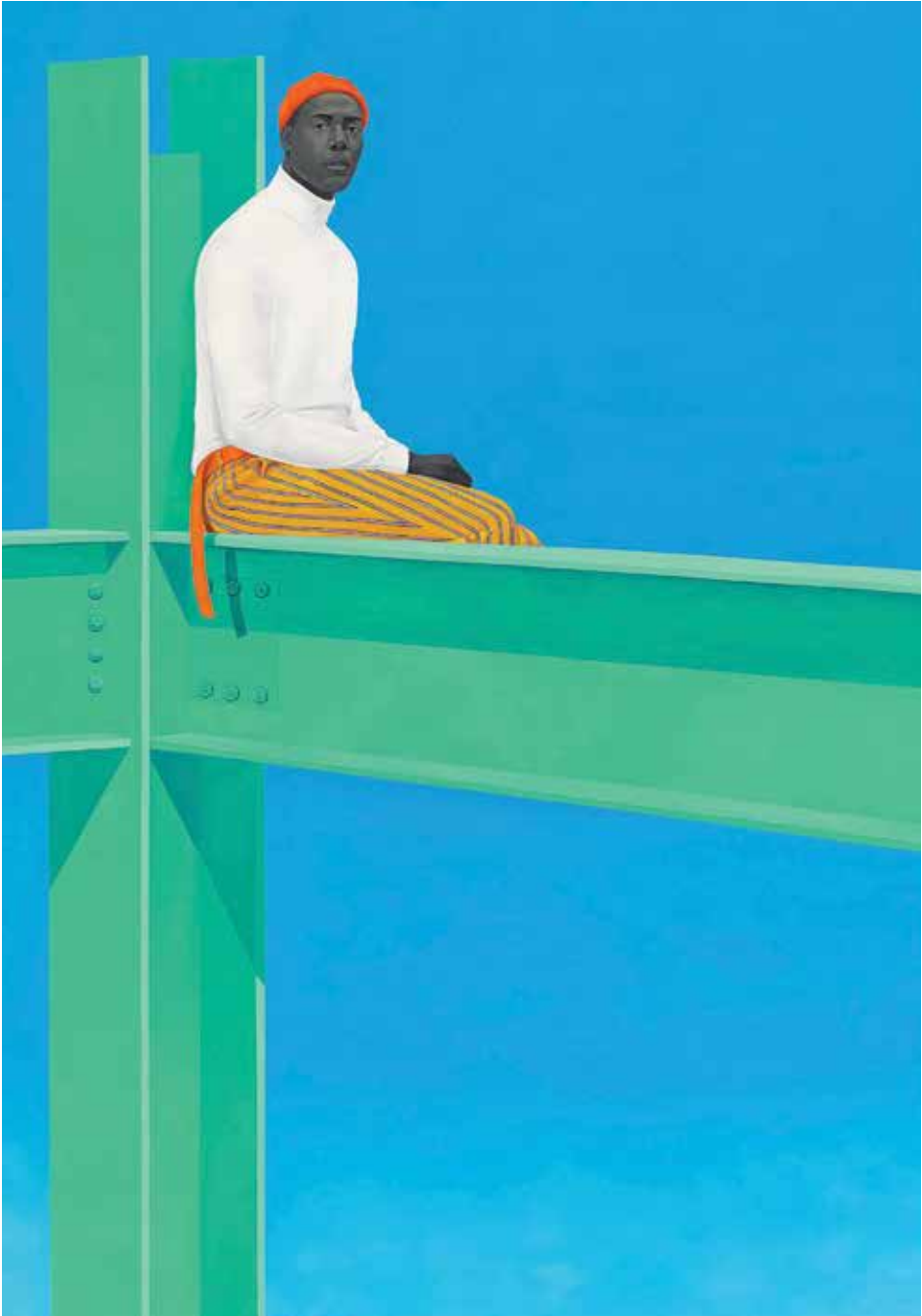


A R T D E S K



KEIGWIN + COMPANY





AMY SHERALD: *American Sublime* ▲
Whitney Museum of American Art / New York, New York

Amy Sherald’s distinctive approach to Black portraiture, with grayscale skin tones contrasting with vividly hued backgrounds, became iconic with her official portrait of Michelle Obama. This traveling survey of about fifty paintings, Sherald’s first major museum solo show, has work dating to 2007, showing how the artist’s style evolved with its influences of abstraction and American Realism while recognizing the long exclusion of Black subjects from art history. One of the most moving works is a portrait honoring Breonna Taylor, who was killed by police in her home and is depicted in radiant jewel tones. *Through August 10, 2025.*

► whitney.org

DANCING WITH BOB: *Rauschenberg, Brown, and Cunningham Onstage*

Trisha Brown Dance Company and the Merce Cunningham Trust / Various Venues

Robert Rauschenberg frequently brought his textural use of materials to dance collaborations, and in honor of the centennial of his birth on October 22, the Trisha Brown Dance Company and the Merce Cunningham Trust are touring pieces featuring his sets and costumes. The series kicks off at the American Dance Festival in Durham, North Carolina, with performances on June 12 and 13 of Brown’s *Set and Reset* and Cunningham’s *Travelogue*. Further dates are planned across the country through April 2026, with new dates to be announced, so keep an eye out for these seminal modern dance pieces arriving near you. *Ongoing through April 2026.*

► trishabrowncompany.org

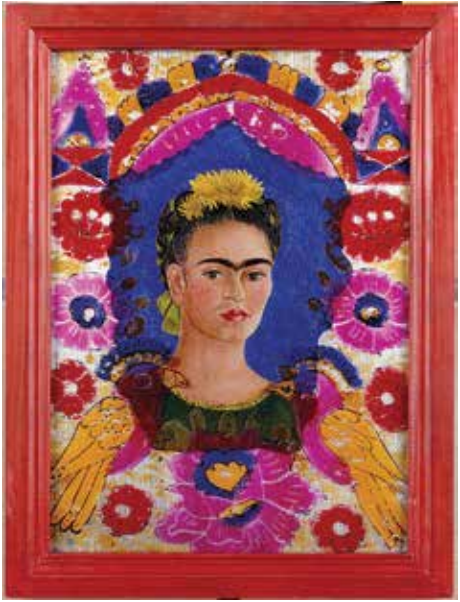
DORIS DUKE THEATER

Jacob’s Pillow / Becket, Massachusetts

In November 2020, a fire destroyed the Doris Duke Theater, a central performance space for the annual Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival, which

showcases companies from across the globe. Now it is reborn as a “living lab for the future of dance,” anticipating robotics, immersive performances, and other technology while still maintaining a connection to the surrounding natural beauty. This summer’s reopening features Taiwanese choreographer and roboticist Huang Yi and Korean choreographer Eun-Me Ahn, who uses 3D holographic projections. *Opens July 9, 2025.*

► jacobsillow.org



FRIDA KAHLO’S MONTH IN PARIS: *A Friendship with Mary Reynolds* ▲

Art Institute of Chicago / Chicago, Illinois

After countless exhibitions on Frida Kahlo, the Art Institute of Chicago is revealing an aspect of the artist that still remains obscure: her stay with avant-garde bookbinder Mary Reynolds in Paris and the influence of this friendship on their respective work. The exhibition has about a hundred objects, including experimental book bindings by Reynolds and artwork by Kahlo. It examines how the two women made a place for themselves in the male-dominated Surrealist movement. *Through July 13, 2025.*

► artic.edu

RACHEL RUYSCH: *Nature into Art* ▶

Toledo Museum of Art / Toledo, Ohio

Rachel Ruysch emerged on the flourishing Dutch art scene at the end of the seventeenth century with a seductive take on still-life painting. Her floral arrangements have an exotic variety of blooms, with insects and reptiles creeping among the petals, and commanded high prices in her lifetime. Yet following her death, her name faded, and her art was dismissed as mere genre work. This first monographic exhibition, which debuted at the Alte Pinakothek in Munich and continues at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, asserts her legacy through a rare and sumptuous gathering of her most significant paintings. *Through July 27, 2025.*

► toledomuseum.org

RAVEN HALFMOON: *Flags of Our Mothers* ▼

The Contemporary Austin / Austin, Texas

Norman, Oklahoma-based artist Raven Halfmoon honors the endurance of Indigenous women with stoneware sculptures made at a heroic scale. Some of her figures stand more than twelve feet tall and weigh hundreds of

pounds. The imprint of Halfmoon’s hands on the clay and the drips from the drenches of red, white, and black paint capture her tactile process, which is inspired by Caddo pottery as well as Moai statues. Her touring solo show includes both indoor and outdoor components, inviting visitors to witness these colossal works up close. *Through August 3, 2025.*

► thecontemporaryaustin.org

JAPONISME: *New Perspectives from the Land of the Rising Sun*

Philbrook Museum of Art / Tulsa, Oklahoma

Coinciding with the Philbrook’s major samurai armor show, this exhibition delves into “Japonisme,” the fascination in Europe and North America for all things Japan—whether made there or not—starting in the late nineteenth century. It features about sixty objects, including paintings, prints, and decorative pieces, by Japanese artists and those inspired by their work. This includes the impact of ukiyo-e woodblocks on the rise of French Impressionism and how objects like folding screens were used as atmospheric interior settings, as shown in a recently acquired painting by Lilla Cabot Perry. *Through August 3, 2025.*

► philbrook.org



UNCANNY ▶

National Museum of Women in the Arts / Washington, D.C.

How do you respond when something safe becomes perilous and the familiar strange? On view in the nation’s capital at a time when the degradation of reproductive rights means the control of women’s bodies is often not their own, *Uncanny* offers a feminist lens on this feeling of unease. It features more than thirty artists spanning decades, including major figures of Surrealism like Meret Oppenheim and Leonora Carrington and contemporary artists like Pipilotti Rist and Shahzia Sikander. Whether Louise Bourgeois’ disconcerting sculptures on the trauma of childbirth or Stephanie Dinkins’s conversations with a robotic woman, these are invitations to confront discomfort. *Through August 10, 2025.*

► nmwa.org

RYOJI IKEDA: *data-verse*

High Museum of Art / Atlanta, Georgia

Japanese artist Ryoji Ikeda uses electronic sound, light, and video to immerse viewers in complex concepts such as the chaos of a black hole or the connections between the microscopic and the macroscopic in the universe. Seven “chapters,” as his works are called, are brought together in this major show and involve data from NASA, CERN, and the Human Genome Project. The multi-sensory experience is cacophonous and disorienting as Ikeda attempts to offer an encounter with immense ideas that cannot be seen. *Through August 10, 2025.*

► high.org

PROSPECT.6: *The Future Is Present, the Harbinger Is Home*

MCA Denver / Denver, Colorado

Prospect New Orleans was launched in the wake of Hurricane Katrina as a way to bring contemporary art to a city in recovery. Its latest edition, which opened in fall 2024, repositioned the triennial’s focus on New Orleans as a model of resilience for other cities facing threats from climate change and impacted by legacies of colonialism. For the first time, selections of its artwork—organized by artist Ebony G. Patterson and MCA Denver curator



Miranda Lash—are traveling out of the city. This Colorado edition showcases themes of adaptability and perseverance, including L. Kasimu Harris’s photographs of Black-owned bars. *Through August 24, 2025.* ▶ mcadenver.org

RUTH ASAWA: A Retrospective

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art / San Francisco, California

There were no boundaries between art and family in Ruth Asawa’s life. The artist, who died in 2013, is best known for her intricate wire hanging sculptures where forms nest and interlock, but less recognized is how she chose art materials that could easily be put down

when caring for her children. This exhibition of more than 300 works spans the entire six decades of her career to show all aspects of her practice. Especially illuminating are explorations of her Bay Area public sculptures made with local students, as well as her advocacy for arts education in schools. *Through September 2, 2025.* ▶ sfmoma.org

DISCOVERING ANSEL ADAMS

Oklahoma City Museum of Art / Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

A young Ansel Adams’s visit to Yosemite National Park in 1916 with his family was a turning point in his life. “One wonder after

another descended upon us ...,” he recalled. “There was light everywhere. A new era began for me.” He took some of his first photographs of nature in the park with an Eastman Kodak Brownie box camera, a gift from his parents. *Discovering Ansel Adams* reflects on these early years of the renowned photographer’s career through some one hundred images and archival materials, from one-of-a-kind works from his adolescence to mural-sized prints of some of his most celebrated works from the 1940s. *Through September 28, 2025.* ▶ okcmoa.com

CHRISTIAN MARCLAY: Doors

Institute of Contemporary Art / Boston / Boston, Massachusetts

Just as his acclaimed *The Clock* (2010) has twenty-four hours of meticulously edited footage of actors responding to timepieces in cinema, Christian Marclay’s *Doors* is a loop of comings and goings spliced together from hundreds of films. Characters enter, exit, and peer through keyholes as if trapped in an endless Escher-esque architecture. This is the American premiere of the work, which was ten years in the making as Marclay sifted through decades of movies for these moments of tension and transition. *Through September 1, 2025.* ▶ icaboston.org

UNDERGROUND SOUNDS

Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern / Houston, Texas

Once a 1920s water reservoir for the City of Houston, the Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern has, since 2016, opened to the public for art installations and performances. This year its “Underground Sounds” series returns, with musicians taking advantage of the reverberation of sound around its cathedral-like columns. Vocalist Sarah Grace Graves performs a Gregorian-chant-inspired piece from June 19–22, Les Cenelles ensemble plays on the theme of water rights and activism from September 11–14, and composer and sound artist Kurt Stallman presents a meditation on nature in the bayou. *Through November 16, 2025.* ▶ buffalobayou.org

JEFFREY GIBSON: the space in which to place me

The Broad / Los Angeles, California

Jeffrey Gibson was the first Indigenous artist to represent the US at the Venice Biennale, and now that 2024 exhibition is adapted for a stateside debut at The Broad. A member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and of Cherokee descent, Gibson uses buoyantly hued geometric patterns for works that grapple with the erasure of Native American and queer

narratives from American history. A centerpiece is a painting newly acquired by The Broad that involves his kaleidoscopic color and references to craft traditions like beadwork in reckoning with how Indigenous children were forced to assimilate in early 1900s schools. *Through September 28, 2025.* ▶ thebroad.org

CONFLUENCE OF NATURE: Nancy Hemenway Barton

Denver Art Museum / Denver, Colorado

The late artist Nancy Hemenway Barton lived most of her life in Maine, but her monumental textile wall sculptures were grounded in her extensive travels around the world. She lived and worked in weaving communities starting in the 1940s, with these experiences informing her abstract work, from using handwoven lambswool inspired by her time with Andean weavers in Bolivia to intricate applied textiles influenced by the Fon in Benin. Viewers can also see selections of her works on paper, as her early work in watercolor shaped her expressive use of flower-dyed wool. *Through October 19, 2025.* ▶ denverartmuseum.org



SITE SANTA FE INTERNATIONAL

Santa Fe, New Mexico

A thematic foundation of the twelfth edition of the Site Santa Fe International is the poetry of the late Oklahoma-born, Santa Fe-based writer N. Scott Momaday. His “wheel of telling” relates to the cyclical nature of a story evolving as it is retold. Curated by Cecilia Alemani, the biennial orients more than 300 works around real and fictional people with roots in New Mexico. From experimental filmmaker Godfrey Reggio to nuclear scientists and saloon owners, the exhibition encompasses venues throughout the city. Sites include off-the-beaten-path institutions such as the New Mexico Military Museum and the Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian. *June 27, 2025–January 13, 2026.* ▶ sitesantafe.org



Pikes Peak



Welcome to the Springs

Bordered to the west by the awe-inspiring Rocky Mountains and to the east by hazy expanses of the Eastern Plains, Colorado Springs, the state's second-largest city, is as flush with nature and culture experiences as the state's better-known destinations.

◀ A quirky town at the base of Pikes Peak, Manitou Springs is known for its local artist community, the **Manitou Cliff Dwellings**, and the mile-long cardio menace known as the **Manitou Incline**.

Going Up

Spend any amount of time in the Springs and your gaze is sure to fix on the 14,115-foot-tall **Pikes Peak**. The well-maintained, but very challenging, thirteen-mile Barr Trail leads the most adventurous hikers to the summit—as does the historic Cog Railway, a refurbished, scenic train ride up and down the mountain.

Fuel Up Before a big day on Pikes Peak, visit **Switchback Coffee**, a local roaster with two locations on the quieter east side of town. You can enjoy a fresh cup of joe and regionally sourced breakfast options.

Tough Stuff For the hard-core hikers, the 6.5 mile trail to **Barr Camp** winds through woody single track halfway up Pikes Peak, where you can book a campsite or refuel and head down the same day.

▶ Grab a bite and a brew at **Ivywild School**, a historic elementary school turned food court, with a handful of restaurants, a whiskey lounge, a brewery, and the aptly named **Principal's Office**, an artisanal cocktail bar.



▲ If you're in it for the view, hop on the **Cog Railway**, a historic year-round train ride that slowly snakes up to the summit of Pikes Peak—no hiking poles required.

◀ **Garden of the Gods** is one of the most well-known hiking spots in Colorado Springs, and for good reason. Towering rock formations and easy, flat trails provide an accessible way to immerse yourself in nature.



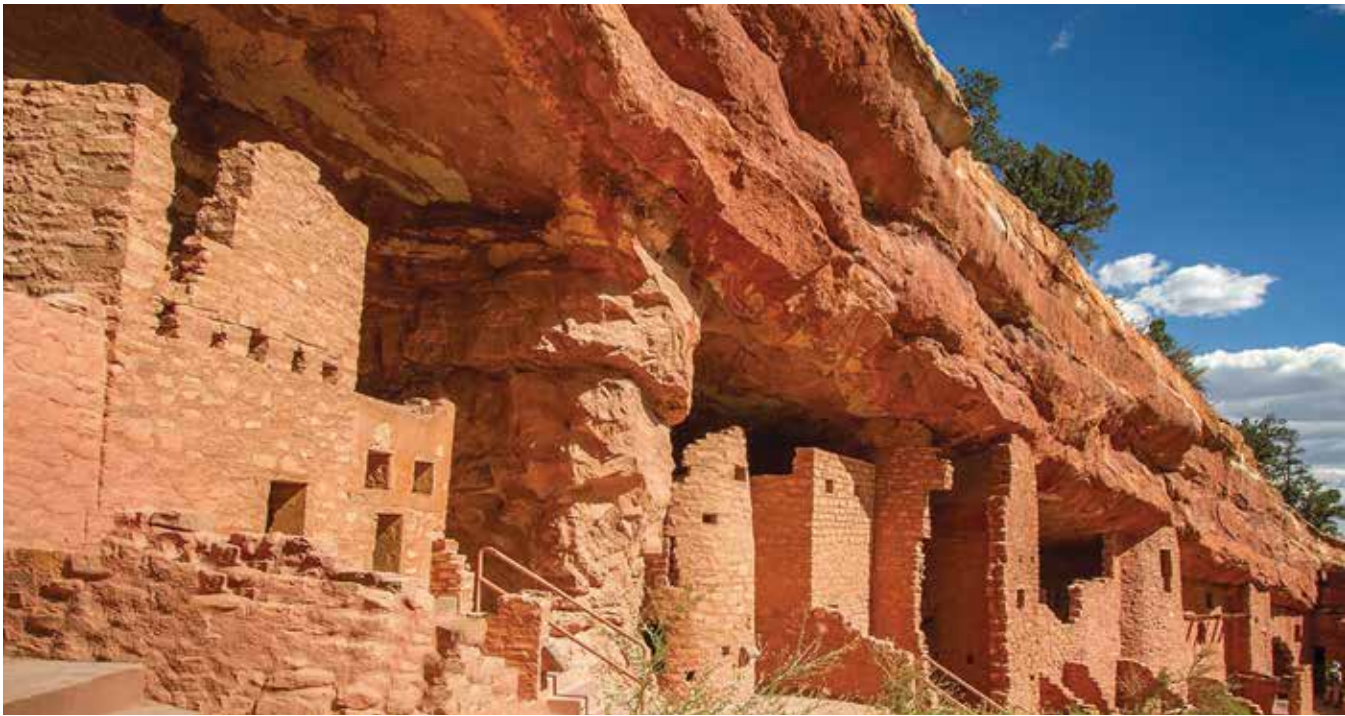
Pointers

FOR A FEW
DAYS ON THE
FRONT RANGE

By Parker Yamasaki



- ◀ **Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum** has collected local work since 1896. While its exhibitions offer a deep cultural dive into the region, the historic building itself is a pleasure to wander around. The museum is open Tuesday through Saturday and admission is free.
- ◀ Explore **the North Cheyenne Cañon Park** lies at the edge of the city with a variety of trails, from easy open-space loops to more challenging single-track trails ascending the foothills.



Life in a Mountain Town

While it's only a twenty-minute drive from Colorado Springs, the steep hillsides surrounding Green Mountain Falls keep the town tucked away from the bustle of the nearby urban center. Art installations from past iterations of the Green Box Arts Festival are scattered throughout town, enchanting the town's one main road and few side streets.

- ◀ A premier summertime event, the **Green Box Arts Festival** features visual and performing artists, who spend time nestled in the hillside town of Green Mountain Falls creating new works for the two-week summer festival.
- Cantina Verde** is the town's go-to dinner spot, serving tacos, fajitas, and even burgers. Catch live music on the patio on Sunday nights.

- ▼ For something off the beaten path, head east to the **Paint Mines Interpretive Park**, a colorful, geologically fascinating space named for the bright clay hues used by American Indians to make paints.





THE ALBERTINA MUSEUM LISA RASTL, REINER RIEDLER, AND AI WEIWEI

NATALI WISEMAN



▲ AI WEI WEI
Arm with Finger in Bronze
Gilded with Gold (2000)

REBEL YELL

A WELL-TIMED RETROSPECTIVE AT THE SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

By **Ryan Steadman**

The current political upheaval in the US might seem like the perfect moment for a sprawling retrospective of today's most prominent activist artist, Ai Weiwei. Yet, with strife constantly erupting worldwide, one could argue that it's always a good time to consider the work of China's most famous contemporary artist.

"There is something universal about human rights and about individuals' rebellion against autocratic regimes and authoritarianism," Ai says when discussing his just-opened Seattle Art Museum retrospective, *Ai, Rebel: The Art and Activism of Ai Weiwei*, his largest and most comprehensive US exhibition ever. "It transcends any specific form of politics, for there is always a struggle between individuals protecting the basic dignity and principles of human life and those in power."

Considering the United States' change in leadership, which has unleashed rippling effects around the globe, citizens could use this exhibition as a road map for navigating uncharted political territory. "This could not be a more timely and urgent exhibition, as Ai's work implores us to consider the role of art and artists to question authority, galvanize change, and stand for free expression," says Scott Stulen, the Seattle Art Museum's director and

CEO, in a press statement, perhaps referencing the fresh power shift in American politics.

The son of a Chinese poet exiled during the Mao Zedong regime, Ai studied at the Beijing Film Academy in the 1980s and early 1990s before moving to the United States, where he discovered contemporary Western artists and writers. In the 2000s, he had begun a series of documentaries and multimedia artworks criticizing various government policies in China, and by the time he was arrested in 2011 in Beijing for alleged economic crimes, Ai had become a global art star.

Cut to this past March, when the Seattle Art Museum, for the first time, opened an exhibition that dedicated all of its locations—its main building, the Seattle Asian Art Museum in Volunteer Park, and the Olympic Sculpture Park on the Seattle waterfront—to one artist, and it seems clear that Ai has culminated his improbable run to the pinnacle of artistic success.

Although tucked-away Seattle may seem like an unusual location choice for such an important, career-defining show, a closer look reveals how the city is a perfect fit for Ai's oeuvre. In fact, Seattle feels quite familiar to him. "My father was exiled to [China's] northwest," says the artist, who feels a unique kinship with America's Emerald City. "But what differs is that Seattle, as a relatively young city, embodies openness and a spirit of exploration."

This kinship, alongside steady stewardship from SAM's Foster Foundation Curator of Chinese Art,

Foong Ping—who has a more thorough understanding of Ai's career than anyone—has led the artist to proclaim that this exhibition is "his strongest in terms of narrative and expression."

Foong, who grew up in Malaysia as a Chinese minority before landing in Seattle in 2016, is also enthusiastic about presenting *Ai, Rebel* to a city that boasts one of the country's largest Chinese populations. "We created a response room in the galleries that invites visitors to share their thoughts, and I'm eager to get a glimpse of the impact of the exhibition on visitors from the Seattle community and beyond," Foong says.

Having put together a show that includes many of Ai's rarest, largest, and most ambitious artworks ever produced, Foong began painstakingly developing this exhibition in January of 2024, hoping to consider more than forty years of Weiwei's work. Yet, by the time it opened, she realized how much more weight the show would carry than even she expected. "[The exhibition] looks backward in time, reflecting upon the experiences of one important artist working in the US, China, and Europe from the 1980s up to today," Foong says. "That is the value of history: examining what has come before and discovering what resonates in the present moment. The incredible power of a single individual, in this case—Ai Weiwei—can change the perspective of many." ❧

Ai, Rebel: The Art and Activism of Ai Weiwei will be on view at the Seattle Art Museum through September 7, 2025.

◀ Installation view of *Ai, Rebel: The Art and Activism of Ai Weiwei* at Seattle Art Museum, 2025.

*Oklahoma Attorney General Gentner
Drummond and Governor Kevin
Stitt play a game of chicken while Big
Poultry continues to pollute.*

By Clifton Adcock
Photography by Shane Bevel

ILLR

OKLAHOMA STATE OFFICIALS are clashing as the fate of a major water source hangs in the balance. A lawsuit between the state and major poultry companies began in 2005 out of concern that farm waste was contaminating the Illinois River watershed. The state and poultry companies are now waiting on a federal court ruling to decide whether evidence from a trial fifteen years ago still holds true. The decision could have far-reaching consequences for the Illinois River and its surrounding region.

In 2023, Federal Judge Gregory Frizzell determined that the evidence from this trial showed poultry companies were liable for decades-long damage caused to the Illinois River watershed by spreading poultry waste on fields and allowing it to wash into the rivers and streams. Previous talks between state and poultry companies to come to an agreement on proper waste management were unsuccessful. “My observation is that poultry would rather litigate and appeal and delay,” Oklahoma Attorney General Gentner Drummond says. “It’s economically beneficial. I wish they would change that.”

Drummond says he wants a clear plan in place that would restrict poultry producers from spreading bird waste on farmland in the Illinois River watershed. Drummond has been at odds with the poultry industry over who, exactly, is to blame for the pollution in the region. He admits that there are other sources of pollution besides the poultry companies, including wastewater treatment plants that discharge into the river and population increase in northwest Arkansas—though their overall part in contaminating the water is not as dramatic as poultry companies contend. “Poultry is still complicit,” Drummond says.



THE ILLINOIS RIVER runs about one hundred miles along the border of Oklahoma and Arkansas. About half a million people live in the surrounding watershed that spans parts of the two states. In Oklahoma, the river flows into

IVER

Lake Tenkiller, which is a destination for boating, fishing and a source of public drinking water.

Since the poultry industry boom of the 1940s, eastern Oklahoma and Arkansas poultry farmers and cattle ranchers have used chicken litter to fertilize their pastures, hay meadows, and crops. During rain events, excess phosphorus from this excrement washes off the fields into streams and rivers, and can end up in bodies of water through stream bank erosion where litter has been over-applied in years past. The phosphorus pollution, produced by waste from poultry farms that dot the region, can kill fish and cause algae blooms, reduced water clarity, and foul-smelling and -tasting drinking water.

In 2005, under then-state Attorney General Drew Edmondson, Oklahoma sued poultry companies including Tyson Foods, Simmons Foods, and Cargill over pollution to the Illinois River watershed.

For years, Edmondson and his team were in negotiations with the poultry companies, the state of Arkansas and Arkansas cities, and the wastewater treatment



▲ The Illinois River, popular for swimming and rafting, is polluted with chicken excrement.

plants that discharge into the river. Edmondson told *The Frontier* he was able to work out deals with the state and cities, but not with the poultry companies. He doubts the poultry companies would willingly reach an agreement with the state now, and he thinks they would likely try to get the case overturned on appeal. “Over twenty years ago—and it’s still true today—the industry is not going to do anything in regard to protecting water unless they are paid to or made to,” Edmondson says, “and we can’t pay them, so we’ve asked the court to make them.”

At present day, other state leaders have not been supportive of Drummond’s continued pursuit of the poultry industry. In a statement, Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt says the lawsuit jeopardizes the state’s close relationship with corporate interests and called for the immediate dismissal of the case—although the judge already ruled in the state’s favor.

“This twenty-year-old lawsuit is simply an attempt by radical environmental extremists and greedy out-of-state trial lawyers to attack industries trying to follow the law,” Stitt says. “Businesses need certainty, not lawfare. The only rational outcome is an immediate dismissal. Anything less threatens the state’s business-friendly environment that Oklahomans value and overwhelmingly support.”

Stitt, who is in his last term, accused Drummond, a fellow Republican who is running for governor in 2026, of extorting the poultry companies and trying to curry political favor with attorneys. “There’s no possible way I would be for playing Monday morning quarterback, going to a business and saying, ‘You’ve got deep pockets, you can afford it—even though you followed all the rules and had all the permits and you did everything we told

▼ A portion of the Illinois River is popular a fishing destination. Excess phosphorous in the water has impacted fish populations and decreased the number of species in the river.



you to do—now we don’t like it and want you to give us a billion dollars,” Stitt says. “That’s basically what these trial attorneys are doing.”

However, such a deal wouldn’t be unheard of. In Tulsa where Stitt lived before he became governor, a 2004 settlement limited the amount of poultry litter that can be spread in the Eucha-Spavinaw watershed, the main source of drinking water for the area. The agreement was reached after the city and state sued most of the same poultry companies in the Illinois River watershed lawsuit because of poor water quality.



Without a settlement, any resolution to the case is still likely years away. “We’re hopeful the judge comes out in favor of the state and sets out certain requirements for the poultry industry,” says Denise Deason-Toyne, president of the environmental group Save the Illinois River. “There will be an appeal, so we’ll have several more years of waiting.”

Deason-Toyne says she believes the Arkansas-based poultry companies have been able to hold sway over some legislators as well as the governor. Campaign finance records show poultry executives donated heavily to Stitt, as well as former and current state political leaders over the years. That political influence, she contends, has caused government officials to side with the out-of-state corporations, rather than their own constituents. “The governor wants this lawsuit dropped. Period,” Deason-Toyne says “And the agencies that are participating are doing so cautiously because they’re all afraid they’re going to get fired.”

Drummond agrees that the poultry industry has a “disproportionate” amount of influence in Oklahoma’s government. “There’s a general fear of poultry by legislators and the governor,” he says.

Poultry companies involved in the lawsuit did not respond to requests for comment. Marvin Childers, president of the Poultry Federation, an advocacy group for poultry and egg producers in Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Missouri, says his organization is concerned that activists and attorneys are using the lawsuit to “end farming and ranching in the Illinois River watershed—and potentially far beyond—for years to come.”

“The Attorney General’s office continues to pursue an outdated lawsuit originally filed two decades ago by a prior administration whose goals do not reflect those of most Oklahomans,” Childers says

in a statement. “This legal effort unfairly threatens the livelihoods of farmers, ranchers, and landowners who acted in full compliance with state regulations. The Attorney General refuses to recognize that Oklahoma’s own responsible agencies report the Illinois River to be a scenic jewel with quality measurements having improved steadily in the last fifteen years.”



The governor berated and fired his former Secretary of Energy and Environment, Ken McQueen, on social media after he found out McQueen attended the December 2024 evidentiary hearing. McQueen, who was already set to resign a few weeks before his firing, says the governor had said nothing about him attending the hearing beforehand. However, Stitt’s spokeswoman, Abigail Cave, says the governor had explicitly instructed McQueen not to attend.

Miles Tolbert, the state’s Secretary of Environment at the time the lawsuit was filed in 2005, says the issue drew a lot of political attention at the time, but the lines were not partisan. Former Republican Governor Frank Keating had pushed for more regulation of the poultry industry. “He set an example on the Republican side about how you could care about Oklahoma’s rivers and lakes and still be true to your principles,” Tolbert says.

Stitt replaced McQueen with Jeff Starling, a corporate attorney and former general counsel for Devon Energy. Starling, whom the governor’s office declined to make available for an interview, did not attend the nearly two-week-long poultry hearing. In January, Starling told Oklahoma Farm Report that Drummond should fire an outside law firm that helped with the case, describing it as a “plaintiff’s law firm.”

Drummond dismissed the idea of firing the firm from the case, explaining that “there’s nothing to do. It would be like firing a surgeon after he’s cut your arm off.”

For the moment, Oklahoma has already won its case, at least until an appeals court takes the matter up. But the state is now asking a judge to order the poultry companies to reduce its distribution of bird waste in the region and pay for clean-up costs. A ruling could come at any time, but according to Drummond, a compromise could help speed things up. “We can find a path where we have a strong poultry industry and clean water.” X

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

About the Publisher

For seventy years, **Kirkpatrick Foundation** has remained true and dedicated to our values. Since 1955, we have invested \$92 million in grant funding to 2,000 charitable organizations in central Oklahoma. **We continue to uphold our beliefs, values, and commitment to serve.** We stand resolved, proud, and unafraid.

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SOCIALIZING IS AN ARTFORM, TOO

Honor Roll

The first major retrospective for internationally recognized artist **Edgar Heap of Birds** (Cheyenne and Arapaho Nation) opened on February 20, 2025, at the **Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center**. More than 400 guests attended the opening of *Hock E Aye Vi: Edgar Heap of Birds: HONOR SONG*, a campus-wide installation dedicated to over four decades of work addressing Indigenous rights, sovereignty, and relationships to place. A powerful drum ceremony began the celebration, and another notable moment occurred when Oklahoma City mayor **David Holt** declared February 20, 2025, “Edgar Heap of Birds Day.” ▶ **Oklahoma City**

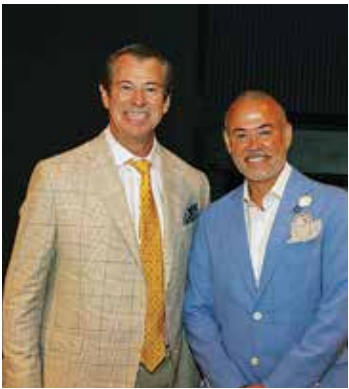


CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: **Edgar Heap of Birds** and his daughter **Deezbaa Heap of Birds**; **Allen Parlier**, **Gabe Friedman**, **Sam Wargin Grimaldo**, **Kim** and **Atlee Hickerson**; **Merhawit Tsegay** and **Kiana Cyrus**; Heap of Birds mingling with attendees; artist **Denise Duong** chats with gallery goers; **Bryson**, **Brooklyn**, and **Ericka Stevens**; **Georgia Harjo**; **Sunrise Tippeconnie** and Heap of Birds during an ArtDesk Conversation; **Aimee Harlow**; and **Sara Lynn Sadorra**



Preserving the Future

Oklahomans in search of a greener Oklahoma City gathered on April 16, 2025, at Oklahoma Contemporary for a luncheon to celebrate and support the creation of Red Ridge Nature Preserve in the heart of the city. Kirkpatrick Philanthropies' dream for Red Ridge is to transform 133 wooded acres of inner OKC into a nature refuge and study center, which will include the historic R.J. Edwards home along with a wildlife preserve and tree collection. **Eric Kramer** and **Garrett Newton** of **Reed Hilderbrand Landscape Architecture** spoke to attendees about the future of this green space. ▶ **Oklahoma City**



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: **Eric Kramer** spoke about plans for the site; **Inger Giuffrida**, **Charis Ward**, and **Mary Rose Siems**; **Melinda McMillan-Miller**, **Aubrey McDermid**, and **Leslie Hudson**; **Robert Cooley** and **Jack Daniel**; **Drew Edmondson**, **Brian Doherty**, and **Miles Tolbert**; **Father Nathan Carr** led the invocation; **Mike Fuhr** of the Nature Conservancy spoke about nature preserves; **Bret Hart**, **Karen** and **Warren Filley**; **Tammy Burnett**, **Mandy Heaps**, **Rebecca Snyder**, **Jennifer D'Agostino**, and **Greg Heanue**; **Mark Zitzow**, and Oklahoma City councilman **Camal Pennington**; and the **Millwood High School band**.



Well Maintained

On March 20, 2025, **Oklahoma City Beautiful** had its fortieth Annual Distinguished Service Awards Luncheon to recognize organizations and individuals who have worked to make Oklahoma City a more beautiful and sustainable community, particularly

FROM LEFT: Now-retired executive director of OKC Beautiful, **Lisa Synar**; chairman of Kirkpatrick Foundation, **Christian Keesee** and OKC Beautiful's executive committee president, **Marla Freeman**.

through education, collaboration, and advocacy. The event celebrated seven outstanding honorees—including *ArtDesk* publisher **Christian Keesee**—for their work in inspiring and creating a more beautiful Oklahoma City. Honoree projects included composting and water-reuse programs, recyclable waste in interior design, community gardening, environmental advocacy, and beautification through the arts. ▶ **Oklahoma City**



Up with the Arts

Allied Arts supporters and donors gathered on April 15, 2025 at Oklahoma Contemporary to honor **Christian Keesee** and **Larry Keigwin** as Allied Arts’ 2025 Honorary Chairs. Keesee and Keigwin are joined by campaign chairs **Sally and Jeff Starling**, likewise dedicated community leaders and philanthropists, to form an exceptional 2025 campaign team of visionary leaders committed to the future and growth of Oklahoma’s cultural nonprofit community. ▶ **Oklahoma City**



▲ CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: One of the Allied Arts’ 2025 honorary chairs, **Christian Keesee**; **Mariachi Lopez** serenaded guests in the lobby; **David Thompson** and **Jordan Dean**; **Sue Ann Arnall** during cocktail hour held in Founders Hall; and **Mike Shelby** and **John Koons** in conversation.
◀ FROM LEFT: **Cindi Shelby**; **Sody Clements**; **Maggie Levescey** and **Colton Hernandez**, flamenco dancers from SPARK! Creative Lab; champion of Oklahoma City **Richard Tanenbaum**.



Cutting Loose

¡Olé! Oklahoma City’s dance community gathered recently to celebrate the fourth annual Calderón Dance Festival in Oklahoma City. **Christian Keesee** and **Larry Keigwin** hosted the lively Cocktails for Calderón to bring together performers, organizers, and supporters—just as the festival’s namesake would have loved. ▶ **Oklahoma City**

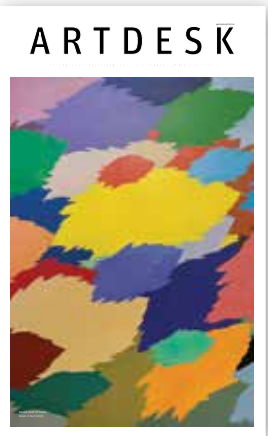
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Attendees included **Hui Cha Poos**; **Ashford Thomson** and **Blakely Thomson-Turpin**; **Alfonso Finest Pulé**; **Shiny Mathew** and **Brandon Graves**; and **Jonathan Garcia** and **Steve Le**.



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Dallas Does Art

Local and international art enthusiasts alike flocked to the **Dallas Art Fair** during April 10–13, 2025, providing ample proof that the Downtown Dallas Arts District can hold its own as a regional base for serious art connoisseurs. Each year national and international galleries present carefully curated exhibitions of modern and contemporary artworks throughout the 74,000-square-foot Fashion Industry Gallery. Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center hosted a group of patrons in the Big D. ▶ **Dallas, Texas**



FROM LEFT: **Leigh Arnold**, assistant curator at the **Nasher Sculpture Center**; **AnnaVittoria Pickett**, **Aimee Harlow**, **Marcus Leonard**, **Christopher Lloyd**, **Glenna Tanenbaum**, **Noah Williams**, **Dane McDowell**, **Trent Riley**, **Lolly Anderson**, **Christian Keesee**, **Sydney Smith**, **Erik Salazar**, **Mady Hendryx**, **Hannah-Jean Heffron**, and **Corey Riddles Lumry**

A Legacy Groundbreaking

Oklahoma City leaders and four adoptable dogs broke ground on February 27, 2025 for the Oklahoma City **Louisa McCune Animal Welfare Center**, named in honor of the late **Louisa McCune**. McCune’s work as director of the Kirkpatrick Foundation played a crucial role in securing funding for the \$42 million center through MAPS 4, and the 70,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art animal welfare center is expected to open in 2027. With goals to improve flow, safety, and hygiene, facility improvements include separate wings for cats and dogs, a 2,800-square-foot barn and pasture, and four separate entrances for adoption, intake, training, and the clinic.



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Contributors



CLIFTON ADCOCK has worked in journalism for the past twenty-five years. He holds a master’s degree in journalism from the University of Oklahoma and has worked for numerous newspapers and nonprofit journalism outlets around the state. He is currently senior reporter at *The Frontier*, a nonprofit investigative journalism outlet based in Tulsa, Oklahoma.



SHANE BEVEL is an editorial and commercial photographer based in Tulsa, Oklahoma. With a background in journalism, Bevel looks for stories that fascinate and educate. Some recent projects include documentation of the battle for Tulsa Public Schools and a photo essay on the inauguration of Tulsa’s first Black mayor, Monroe Nichols.



PARKER YAMASAKI is a culture journalist based in Colorado. She is a staff writer for the statewide publication *The Colorado Sun*, and a freelance critic for regional magazines around the American southwest. She has a Master’s in Arts Journalism from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and is the inaugural journalist-in-residence at the 2025 Green Box Arts Festival.

FROM THE EDITORS: The story Ill River on page 16–18 gives an excellent overview of the ongoing, and in our view, unnecessary litigation over polluting the Illinois River and surrounding farmland. We support the position of Oklahoma Attorney General Gentner Drummond. It’s time for poultry companies to stop appealing, do what is right, and abide by the 2023 federal ruling that determined they are liable for the damage done to the watershed caused by waste from their poultry operations.

ARTDESK

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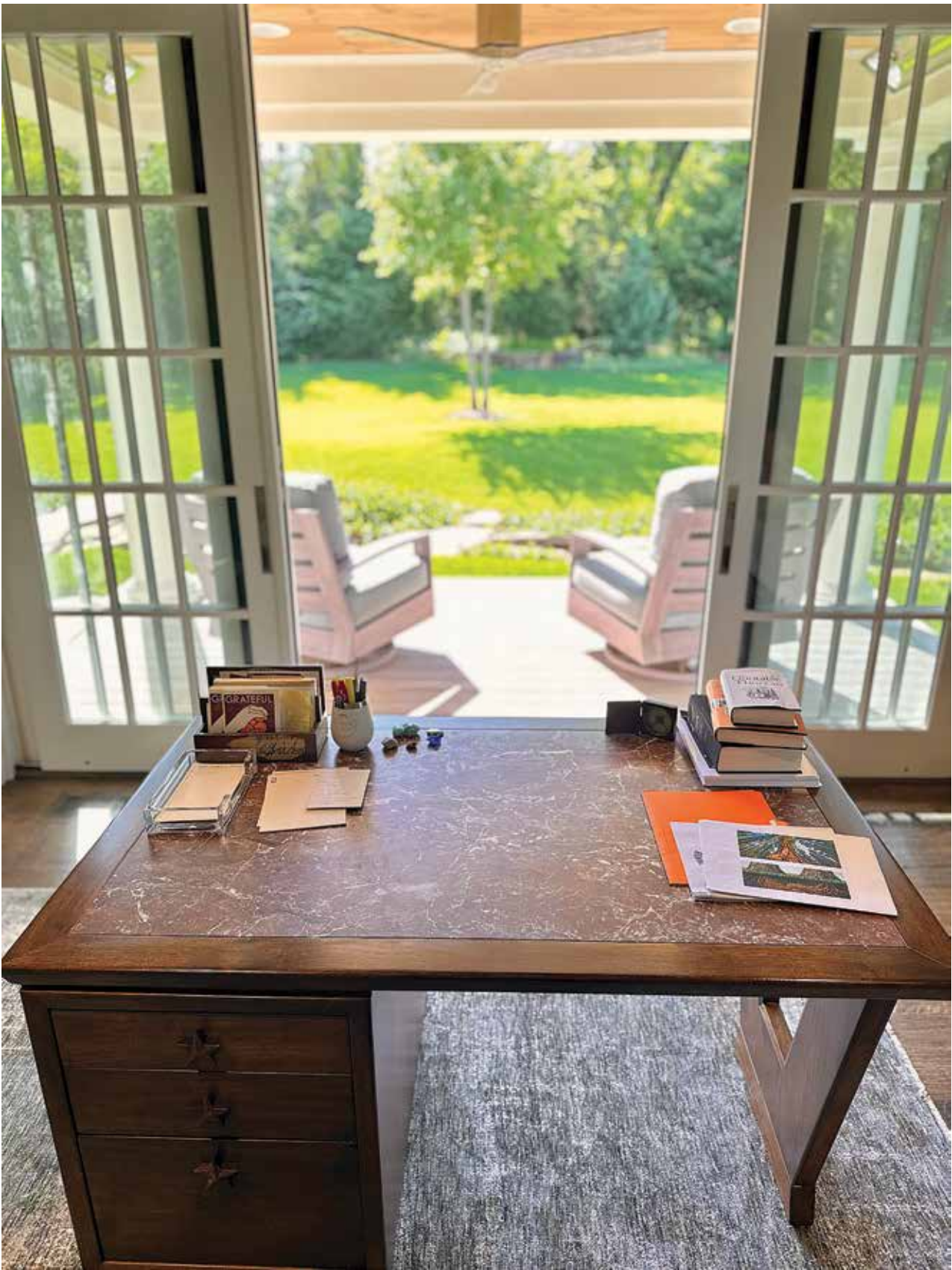
This issue is dedicated to the memory of Pope Francis, whose kindness and acceptance should serve as an example to us all.

And to Jo Lynne Jones, the John Kirkpatrick executive director of Oklahoma City Ballet, who is retiring after seven years of dedicated service.

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
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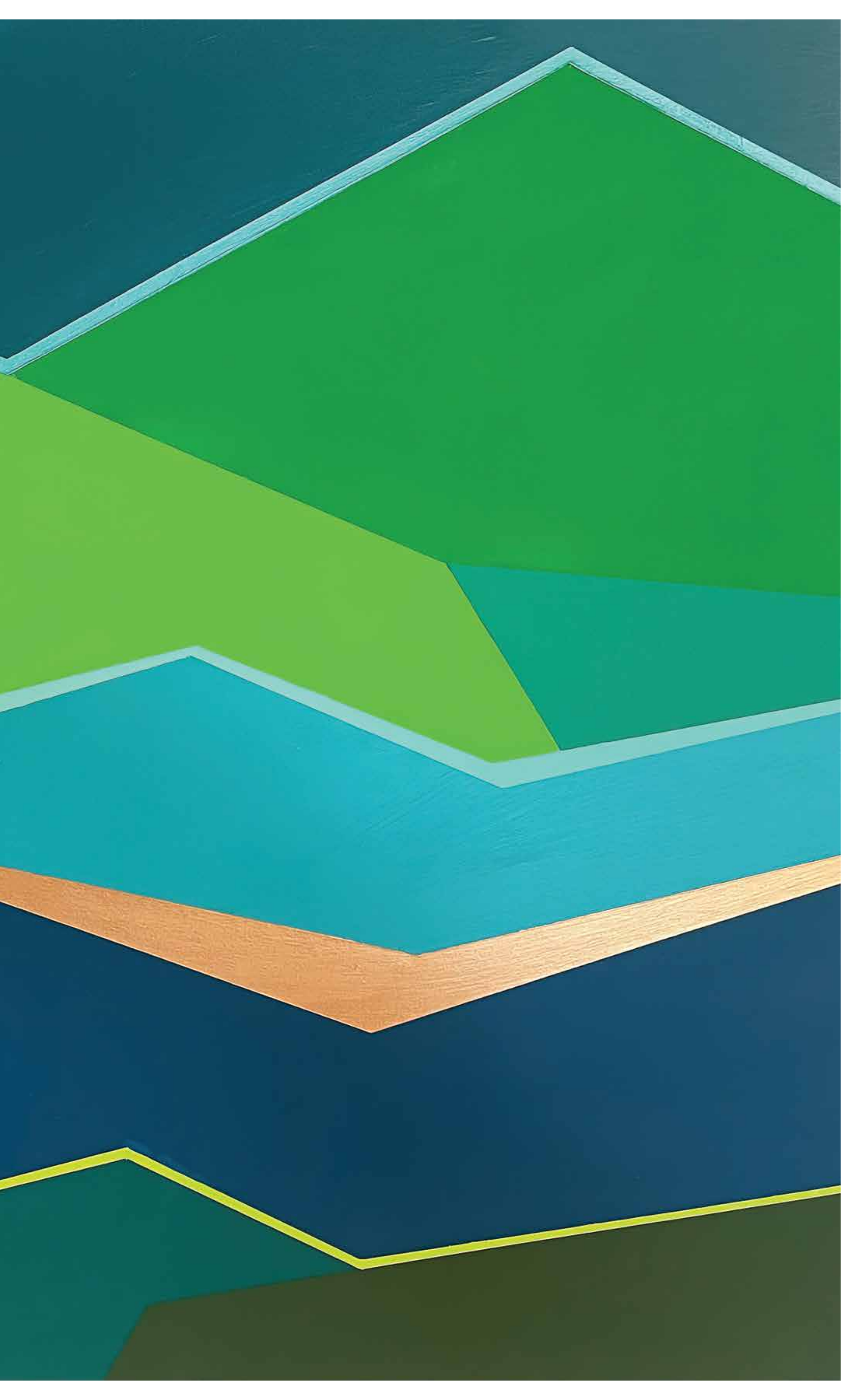


Sam Presti's desk in Oklahoma City (2025)

For All Seasons

A native of Concord, Massachusetts, **Sam Presti** used Henry David Thoreau's experience at Walden Pond to inspire his working space and pay homage to the history of his hometown. The Presti family refers to this small, spartan environment as the Walden Room. Inspired by nature and simplicity, this reading and writing room has no technology, plenty of natural light and a view into a woodland that experiences the four seasons in Oklahoma. The marble desk is a family heirloom used by Presti's grandfather, who was an architect and builder in New York City in the 1940s following his service in World War II.

Since 2007, Sam Presti has served as general manager for the Oklahoma City Thunder professional basketball team. In May 2025, Presti was awarded Executive of the Year award from the National Basketball Association. This season, the Thunder finished as the top-ranked team in the NBA with sixty-eight regular season wins. They are the youngest team to ever reach the Western Conference finals.





Daily Festival Schedule

Friday



6.27
Skyspace: Sunrise Show · 4:50AM
Visual Art Unveilings
10AM · Farm Stand
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show · 11AM
ArtDesk Conversation with Patrick Shearn of Poetic Kinetics
12PM · CiWW
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show · 2PM
Opening Day Party for Families
2PM · Farm Stand
The Vindicators in Concert
3PM · Farm Stand
Festival Kick-Off Party
5- 6:30PM · Lakeview Terrace
Exclusive Donor Event: Preview for Colorado Ballet
7PM · Sallie Bush
Skyspace: Sunset Show · 8:30PM

Saturday



6.28
Skyspace: Sunrise Show · 4:50AM
Water Lantern Design Studio
9AM – 3PM · Studio 3
Yoga
9 – 10AM · Bear Crossing Studio
Write About Art
with Parker Yamasaki
10AM – 1PM · Studio 6
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show
11AM
Okee Dokee Brothers
11AM · Lakeview Terrace
Colorado Ballet
2PM · Sallie Bush
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show · 2PM
Healing Sound Journey
3:30PM · Skyspace
Healing Sound Journey
4:45PM · Skyspace
Colorado Ballet
7PM · Sallie Bush
Skyspace: Sunset Show · 8:30PM

Sunday



6.29
Skyspace: Sunrise Show · 4:50AM
Water Lantern Design Studio
9AM – 5PM · Studio 3
Yoga
9 – 10AM · Bear Crossing Studio
Guided Art Walk
10AM · Farm Stand
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show · 11AM
Exclusive Donor Event:
Patron Party & Performance
1:30 – 3:30PM
Bear Crossing Studio
Horse Wellness Meadow Open House · 4PM
ICONS
6PM · Lakeview Terrace
Skyspace: Sunset Show · 8:30PM

Monday
6.30
Dine and Design
with Karen Watson
11:30AM – 2:00PM
Private Residence

Tuesday



7.01
Skyspace: Sunrise Show · 4:50AM
Water Lantern Design Studio
9AM – 2PM · Studio 3
Plein Air Painting
9AM – 12PM Half Day
9AM – 4PM Full Day
Farm Stand
Leave No Trace Hike
9AM · Farm Stand
Colorado Ballet presents
Movement Storytime
10 – 10:30AM · Sallie Bush
Colorado Ballet presents
Groove Together:
A Family Dance Party!
11AM – 12PM · Sallie Bush
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show
11AM · Skyspace
Zumba
2PM · Farm Stand
A Night of French Bordeaux
with Howard & Jane Price
7 – 9PM · Private Residence
Skyspace: Sunset Show · 8:30PM

Wednesday



7.02
Skyspace: Sunrise Show · 4:50AM
Water Lantern Design Studio
9AM – 2PM · Studio 3
Yoga
9 -10AM · Bear Crossing Studio
“Your Stories, Our History”
Open Studio · 9:30 - 11:30AM
Studio 5
Guided Art Walk
10AM · Farm Stand
Keith Haring Fitness
Court Training
10AM-12PM
Poetry Class
10AM – 2PM · Learning Center
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show · 11AM
ArtDesk Conversation with Colorado Ballet
12 - 1PM · CiWW
Colorado Ballet Master Class
1:30-3PM · Sallie Bush
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show · 2PM
Family Film Screening: The Unsinkable Molly Brown
7PM · Sallie Bush
Skyspace: Sunset Show · 8:30PM

Thursday



7.03
Skyspace Sunrise: Show · 4:50AM
Water Lantern Design Studio
9AM – 5PM · Studio 3
Yoga
9 – 10AM · Bear Crossing Studio
Apple Pie Class
10AM – 12PM · CiWW
Poetry Class
10AM – 2PM · Learning Center
Cut, Color, Paste, Collage Class
10AM – 4PM · Studio 6
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show
11AM · Skyspace
“Your Stories, Our History”
Open Studio
12:30 – 2:30PM
Studio 5
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show · 2PM
Poetry Reading
2:30PM · Farm Stand
Fitness Class with LaDonna Reed
4PM · 5PM · Farm Stand
Nutrition Presentation with LaDonna Reed
6PM-7PM · Studio 6
Colorado Ballet
7PM · Sallie Bush
Skyspace: Sunset Show · 8:30PM

Friday



7.04
Skyspace: Sunrise Show · 4:50AM
Water Lantern Design Studio
9AM – 8PM · Studio 3
Yoga
9 – 10AM · Bear Crossing Studio
Guided Art Walk
10AM · Farm Stand
Environmental Hike with FOUPT
10AM · Pool Park
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show · 11AM
The Mayor’s Forum
12 - 1PM · CiWW
“Your Stories, Our History”
Open Studio
12:30 – 2:30PM
5:30 – 7:30PM · Studio 5
4th of July Pie Contest
1:30PM · Farm Stand
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show · 2PM
Block Party
6PM · Farm Stand
Badda Boom Brass Band
7PM · Farm Stand
Skyspace: Sunset Show · 8:30PM
Water Lantern Launch
9PM · Gazebo Lake

Saturday



7.05
Skyspace: Sunrise Show · 4:55AM
Yoga
9 – 10AM · Bear Crossing Studio
“Your Stories, Our History”
Open Studio
10:30AM -12:30PM · Studio 5
Guided Art Walk
11AM · Farm Stand
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show · 11AM
Colorado Ballet
2PM · Sallie Bush
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show · 2PM
Colorado Ballet
7PM · Sallie Bush
Skyspace: Sunset Show · 8:25PM

Sunday



7.06
Skyspace: Sunrise Show
4:55AM
Green Box & Beyond Bike Tour
8AM · Start at Wines of Colorado
Keith Haring Fitness
Court Training · 8 - 10AM
Yoga
9 – 10AM · Bear Crossing Studio
“Your Stories, Our History”
Studio · 10:30AM – 1:30PM
Studio 5
Guided Art Walk
11AM · Farm Stand
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show · 11AM
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show · 2PM
Colorado Ballet
2PM · Sallie Bush
Healing Sound Journey
3:30PM · Skyspace
Healing Sound Journey
4:45PM · Skyspace
Lily Henley in Concert
6PM · Lakeview Terrace
Skyspace: Sunset Show · 8:25PM

Tuesday



7.08
Skyspace: Sunrise Show
4:55AM
Leave No Trace Hike
9AM · Mountain Road Corner
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show
11AM
“Your Stories, Our History”
Open Studio
12-2PM · Studio 5
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show
2PM · Skyspace
Ikebana Workshop
with Heidi Almosara
2 - 4PM · Studio 6
Aqua Zumba
2 – 3PM · GMF Pool
Colorado Springs Youth Symphony:
Sounds of Summer Orchestra
7PM · Sallie Bush
Skyspace: Sunset Show
8:25PM
Astronomy & S’mores
9 - 11PM · Lakeview Terrace

Wednesday



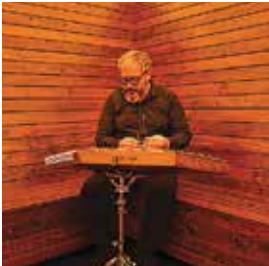
7.09
Skyspace: Sunrise Show
4:55AM
Yoga
9 – 10AM
Bear Crossing Studio
Drawing Class: Expressing Green
Mountain Falls
9AM – 12PM · Studio 6
Keith Haring Fitness
Court Training
10AM – 12PM
Sweet & Savory Hand Pies
10AM – 12:30PM · Sallie Bush
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show · 11AM
Fire Mitigation Panel
12 – 1PM · CiWW
Fire Mitigation Hike
1:30PM · CiWW
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show
2PM
Vanilla Extract Making
2:30 – 5PM · Sallie Bush
Skyspace: Sunset Show
8:25PM

Thursday



7.10
Skyspace: Sunrise Show
4:55AM
Yoga
9 – 10AM
Bear Crossing Studio
“Your Stories, Our History”
Open Studio
10AM – 1PM · Studio 5
Collage Class:
From Scraps to Scrolls
10AM – 4PM · Studio 6
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show
11AM
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show
2PM
Fitness Class with LaDonna Reed
4 - 5PM · Farm Stand
Ryan & Ryan: Going Gershwin
7PM · Sallie Bush
Moonlit Hike with FOUPT
8:30PM · Pool Park
Amir Amiri
10PM · Skyspace

Friday



7.11
Amir Amiri
12AM · Skyspace
Yoga
9 - 10AM · Bear Crossing Studio
Amir Amiri
11:00AM · Skyspace
Amir Amiri
12:00PM · Skyspace
ArtDesk Conversation with Tobi Kieseewalter
12PM – 1PM · CiWW
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show
2PM
The MOTH PROJECT
7PM · Sallie Bush
Skyspace: Sunset Show
8:25PM

Saturday



7.12
Skyspace: Sunrise Show
4:55AM
Yoga
9 – 10AM · Bear Crossing Studio
Birdwatching Hike
9:30 – 10:30AM · Farm Stand
Birding Presentation
11AM · Studio 6
The Adventures of Peter Rabbit
11AM · Mountain Road Corner
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show
11AM
Guided Art Walk
2PM · Farm Stand
Skyspace: Closed Roof Show
2PM
“Your Stories, Our History”
Open Studio
7:30 a- 9:30PM · Studio 5
Silent Disco Party
8 – 10PM · Farm Stand
Skyspace: Sunset Show
8:25PM · Skyspace