

SCOTTSDALE: THE VIBRANT ART CAPITOL OF ARIZONA

Maybe it's the Southwestern light or the creosote-scented air after a desert rain. Maybe it's the technicolor sunrises and sunsets, or the strength and beauty of the ubiquitous Saguaro cactus. Perhaps it's the independent, free spirit of this Southwestern city. For many reasons, Scottsdale has always inspired creative expression among artists working in all mediums, from ancient Puebloan potters to today's cutting-edge installation artists.

SCOTTSDALE PUBLIC ART

In a destination that embraces creativity and boasts 330 days of sunshine per year, it's no wonder art is found on nearly every street corner. When visitors stroll the streets of Scottsdale, they notice striking statues, dramatic fountains and other large-scale public works, thanks to the [Scottsdale Public Art Program](#).

Scottsdale Public Art is partially funded by the City of Scottsdale public art ordinances, and managed by [Scottsdale Arts](#), a private, nonprofit 501 (c)(3) management organization that administers the arts and cultural affairs of the City of Scottsdale, and also manages the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts and the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art.

- The city's public art collection includes nearly 100 public artworks and more than 800 portable works found in city-owned buildings, preserving Scottsdale's cultural heritage for future generations.
- Two permanent public artworks of note include [Robert Indiana's iconic "LOVE" sculpture](#) and "[Knight Rise](#)," a Skyspace created by internationally celebrated earth and light artist, James Turrell.
- [Soleri Bridge and Plaza](#) in Old Town Scottsdale, built over the Arizona Canal, serves as a pedestrian passage and solar calendar, and is the only bridge ever constructed by the late, famed architect and designer, Paolo Soleri.

See these three works and many more inspiring pieces in Old Town on a [Scottsdale Public Art self-guided walking tour](#).

MUSEUMS

- Designed by famous local architect Will Bruder, the downtown [Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art](#) (SMoCA) is a stylish space with five ever-changing galleries devoted to art, architecture and design.
- Old West meets New West at [Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West](#), which opened in Jan. 2015. The 43,000-square foot museum showcases historic and contemporary works from all 19 western states in five galleries.
- The vision of Robert Ulrich, former Target CEO, [Musical Instrument Museum](#) awes music lovers of all ages. More than 5,000 instruments are displayed from around the globe, including those of musicians like Elvis and John Lennon.
- [Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin West](#) was built by iconic architect Frank Lloyd Wright and his apprentices in the 1930s as his personal home, studio and architectural laboratory. Today, it serves as a working site for students of the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture at Arizona State University and can be seen by the public via [several insightful tours](#).

PERMANENT ATTRACTIONS

- [Wonderspaces](#) is a breakthrough concept that partners with U.S. and international artists to bring engaging artwork to new audiences. Scottsdale is Wonderspaces' first permanent home, where visitors can enjoy refreshments within the 80-minute show and explore topics such as power, religion, time and reality through rotating, experiential installations.
- Every Thursday night since 1975, the art galleries in the downtown Arts District are lit up by [Scottsdale ArtWalk](#), where visitors and locals mingle with artists and art enthusiasts, while sipping wine and nibbling appetizers.
- Since opening in 1975, [Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts](#) has provided a diverse season of dance, music, theater, comedy and film. More than 1,000 indoor and outdoor performances, educational programs, festivals and other events are presented and hosted annually, serving approximately 250,000 participants.
- [Cosanti](#), just north of downtown in Paradise Valley, is the former home of Paolo Soleri and a hidden gem that offers a firsthand look at the artists continuing his work by firing bronze and ceramic bells onsite daily.
- Also in Paradise Valley, in a series of adobe structures along the Arizona Canal dating back to the 1930s, a working artists' compound is found. [Cattle Track](#) is a haven for writers, photographers, performers and other artists.
- [Scottsdale Artists' School](#) opened in 1983 as a place where artists of all skill levels could learn from the best working artists in the country. The Youth Academy provides drawing, painting and pottery instruction to young students during fall and spring breaks. Adult watercolor, photography and sculpture sessions are offered on a daily and weekly basis.

ANNUAL EVENTS & FESTIVALS

- The [Celebration of Fine Art](#) is a 10-week gathering that begins in January and brings together 100 artists. Beneath a sprawling white tent, visitors interact with the artists and watch them work.
- Old Town Scottsdale is graced with American Indian music, dance, art and food in March, with [Native Trails](#), a free festival presented by the Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation and produced by [Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts](#).
- Established in 1971, [Scottsdale Arts Festival](#) annually attracts tens of thousands of casual and serious art collectors to the lush gardens and beautiful public sculptures of the [Scottsdale Civic Center Mall](#) in March.

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- The city becomes a hotbed of public art, design and performance art in November with [Canal Convergence](#). This free, multi-day event brings the Scottsdale Waterfront to life with large-scale public art installations curated from artists around the globe, as well as community programming such as artist talks, music and dance.
- While there, art connoisseurs shouldn't miss the [Larsen Art Auction](#) (late October) for modern and contemporary consignment pieces from renowned artists, and film buffs will want to make time for the [Scottsdale International Film Festival](#) (early November).

ARTSY HOTELS

Some of Scottsdale's finest resorts boast impressive art collections that are free to browse as a resort guest or just a curious day-tripper.

- The Gallery at [Mountain Shadows](#) adds a special touch to this modern resort, with museum-quality exhibitions and new works debuted every two months. Gallery tours and opening receptions with the artists are also open to guests.
- The [Phoenician's](#) extensive art collection includes a variety of works from Arizona artists, as well as 11 sculptures from renowned Native American Artist Allan Houser, who was awarded the 1992 National Medal of Arts by President George H.W. Bush. Take a self-guided tour of Houser's work, located throughout the resort grounds.
- Considered by many to be the best-preserved midcentury hotel in the U.S., [Hotel Valley Ho](#) offers expert-led architectural tours of the buildings and grounds, designed by Edward L. Varney, a contemporary of Frank Lloyd Wright.
- [The Hermosa Inn](#) is a boutique hideaway originally built in the 1930s by famed cowboy artist Alonzo "Lon" Megargee as his art studio and residence. The resort hosts an award-winning Artist-in-Residence series, seasonal art walks and a \$2-million art installment of sculptures and paintings from Figarelli Fine Art.
- Throughout the [JW Marriott Camelback Inn](#), guests can see bronze statues of the late sculptor Dave McGary, whose work is found in museums and private and public collections around the world.
- Guests of the [Hyatt Regency Scottsdale Resort & Spa at Gainey Ranch](#) can take a self-guided tour of the Native American Learning Center, which details the significance of art such as jewelry textiles, pottery and carvings, and includes depictions of day-to-day life on the Navajo and Hopi reservations.
- Through the [Andaz Scottsdale Resort & Bungalows'](#) partnership with Cattle Track, local artists from the compound participate in talks, lectures, exhibitions and live performances on-property – and are the people behind the artwork displayed in the guestrooms and throughout the resort's common areas.
- [Talking Stick Resort's Cultural Center](#) showcases distinguished artwork from the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, including paintings, sculpture, metal work, ceramics and basketry. Also housed at the resort is a permanent exhibition of historic photographs from the collection of Jeremy Rowe Vintage Photography dating back to 1880.

Discover more ways to [experience the arts in Scottsdale](#).