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## **Arizona: The State of the Arts**

Artists have long been drawn to Arizona's wide-open landscapes and clear, ethereal light, as well as to its Old West and Native American heritages. The result: A wealth of creative work, from all eras and in all genres, showcased in galleries, museums, and public places throughout the state.

### **Fine Art: Museums and Galleries**

**Museums:** It's no surprise that Arizona's major art institutions should be concentrated in its urban centers. The Southwest's largest art museum, the **Phoenix Art Museum**, not only has excellent permanent holdings in several areas, including Western and Asian art, but also hosts major traveling shows. Phoenix's **Heard Museum** highlights Native American painting, sculpture, and crafts, past and present. **The Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art** puts on cutting-edge shows in a variety of media, as does the **Arizona State University Art Museum** in nearby Tempe. This is just one of more than 20 free museums on Arizona State's campus, including the one-of-a-kind **Ceramics Research Center**. Western and Spanish Colonial art are among the strengths of the **Tucson Museum of Art**. On Tucson's University of Arizona campus, the **Center for Creative Photography** was conceived by Ansel Adams and highlights his work, among that of other modern masters, and the **Museum of Art** has a good selection of international sculpture.

Art gems in smaller cities and towns include Flagstaff's **Museum of Northern Arizona**, featuring Native American crafts as well as Western paintings, sculptures and etchings; the **Phippen Museum of Western Art** in Prescott, with current and past work; Wickenburg's **Desert Caballeros Western Museum**, including Russells, Remingtons, and the like in its permanent collection; and, in southeast Arizona near Benson, the **Amerind Foundation Museum**, showcasing historic American Indian artifacts and contemporary traditional work.

**Galleries:** Downtown **Scottsdale** is the hub of art galleries in the state, offering some of the greatest selection and diversity in the Southwest. **Phoenix** and **Tucson** also offer excellent acquisition opportunities in all genres, especially for those seeking up-and-coming talent. In fact, Downtown Phoenix is emerging as a top destination for modern and pop culture art.

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Smaller **Sedona** has an extremely high ratio per capita of places to buy art, as do **Tubac** and **Jerome**, arts and crafts enclave where it's still possible to unearth inexpensive treasures. **Flagstaff, Prescott, and Wickenburg** have several galleries worth browsing as well.

### **Architecture**

Some of the finest buildings in and around Tucson are churches: the beautiful Spanish-Moorishstyle **San Xavier del Bac** mission, which arose south of town in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century; **St. Augustine**, modeled after the cathedral in Queretero, Mexico, with an ornate sandstone facade; and, designed by Josias Joesler, Tucson's most heralded architect, **St. Phillip in the Hills**. But the state comes through with the gracious **Pima County Courthouse**, a downtown landmark. In Greater Phoenix, **Frank Lloyd Wright** dominates the architectural landscape. His home and architecture school, **Taliesin West**, is in north Scottsdale, and Wright is responsible for such buildings as ASU's **Grady Gammage Auditorium** in Tempe. His influence through the generations can also be seen in Phoenix's **Arizona Biltmore**, created by Wright protégé Albert Chase McArthur; in **Cosanti**, the Paradise Valley craft village designed by Paolo Soleri, one of Wright's students (Soleri was recently commissioned to build a bridge in downtown Scottsdale); and in Phoenix's dazzling **Burton Barr Central Library**, whose principal architect, Will Bruder, was one of Soleri's students.

Wright's influence also extended farther north: In Sedona, the **Chapel of the Holy Cross** was created by Marguerite Brunswig Staude to blend into the red rock landscape. But around the Grand Canyon's South Rim, tourism mogul Fred Harvey held the most architectural sway. He hired Charles Whittlesey, architect of the stone-and-log **Riordan Mansion** (now a state historic park) in Flagstaff, to build the grand European hunting lodge-style **El Tovar**; and commissioned Mary Colter to create **Hopi House, Hermits Rest, Lookout Studio, Bright Angel Lodge**, and the **Indian Watchtower at Desert View**, all beautifully meshed with their surroundings. **La Posada** hotel in Winslow is also a Fred Harvey/Mary Colter collaboration.

### **Public Art, Past and Present**

Public art is nothing new in Arizona. The meaning of the many images painted or etched on rocks by the region's early inhabitants is still being debated, but their importance isn't. Some of

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the best places to see petroglyphs around the state include **Rock Art Canyon Ranch** south of Winslow; **Petrified Forest National Park**; **V Bar V Ranch**, near Sedona; **Deer Valley Rock Art Center**, north of Phoenix; and **Signal Hill** at **Saguaro National Park West**.

More recently, municipally financed art has ranged from the famous (Robert Indiana's LOVE cube outside the Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts) to the infamous (Snake Bridge, a three-dimension rattlesnake covering a Tucson overpass).

### **A Few Sketches**

- You'll find an arts festival somewhere in Arizona nearly every weekend. Among the tops: The **Tubac Festival of the Arts** (February); **The Scottsdale Arts Festival** (March); **Hopi** and **Navajo festivals of arts and culture** in Flagstaff (July/August).
- Those who want gallery guidance – not to mention free nibbles – can join the Scottsdale ArtWalk, held every Thursday, or downtown Phoenix's First Fridays Art Walk, both offered year round. Many other cities, including Tucson and Sedona, also offer art walks, gallery tours, and studio tours.

For additional Arizona travel information and deals, visit [www.arizonaguide.com](http://www.arizonaguide.com). For media information only, visit [www.arizonaguide.com/press-room](http://www.arizonaguide.com/press-room)

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