

AMFA Institutional Fact Sheet

Overview

Founded in 1937, the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts is the largest cultural institution of its kind in the state, offering a unique blend of visual, educational, and performing arts experiences. AMFA is committed to featuring diverse media and artistic perspectives within its permanent collection as well as through rotating temporary exhibitions. AMFA's international collection spans eight centuries, with strengths in works on paper, and includes notable holdings by artists from Arkansas, the South, and across the United States and Europe.

With a vibrant mix of ideas, cultures, and places, AMFA extends its commitment to artistic diversity through the innovative Windgate Art School, a dynamic children's theatre and performing arts program, and community-focused educational programs for all ages. Located in Little Rock's oldest urban green space, MacArthur Park, AMFA's landmark building and grounds are designed by Studio Gang and SCAPE, in collaboration with Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects.

Location

501 East Ninth Street, Little Rock, Arkansas 72202.

AMFA is in the heart of downtown's historic MacArthur Park.

Leadership

Harriet Stephens, Capital Campaign Co-Chair, Building Committee Chair, Director on AMFA Foundation Board of Directors.

Warren Stephens, Capital Campaign Co-Chair and Chair of AMFA Foundation Board of Directors.

Stan Hastings, AMFA Board of Trustees.

Dr. Victoria Ramirez, Executive Director, AMFA.

History

AMFA's history dates to 1914 when a group of intrepid women formed the Fine Arts Club with a mission to bring the arts to Arkansas. These women planted seeds that were later realized when the Museum of Fine Arts opened in downtown Little Rock's MacArthur Park in 1937. Designed by architect H. Ray Burks and built by the Works Progress Administration—as part of President Franklin Roosevelt's "New Deal"—the Museum of Fine Arts was the first museum dedicated to the fine arts in the state of Arkansas.

In 1959, as the art collection and mission continued to grow, the Museum of Fine Arts launched a fundraising campaign with the help of Winthrop and Jeanette Rockefeller to create a statewide center for the arts. In 1960, the City of Little Rock Board of Directors adopted an ordinance officially establishing the Arkansas Arts Center, and the building—an addition to the 1937 structure—opened in 1963. Over the next 50 years, the Museum experienced seven more expansions, including a 1982 renovation that preserved the 1937 façade as a design feature of an interior gallery.

In 2016, a project to reimagine the Arkansas Arts Center for the 21st century began when Little Rock residents voted overwhelmingly in favor of a hotel-tax bond to renovate its MacArthur Park building. That same year, Studio Gang was selected as the project's design architects for their vision of the new building. In 2017, SCAPE joined as the project's landscape architects with Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects as associate architects. In October 2019, this transformational project broke ground, and in 2021, the Arkansas Arts Center changed its name to the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts. On April 22, 2023, AMFA celebrated its historic Grand Opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, then officially opened its doors for guests.

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Visual Arts Program

The rich and distinctive Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts Foundation Collection contains approximately 14,000 works of art in various media, primarily from Europe and the Americas, dating from the 14th century to the present. Strengths include 19th- through 21st-century works on paper with a focus on drawing, contemporary craft, and art of the American South, including works by prominent photographers and self-taught artists.

The Harriet and Warren Stephens Galleries house exhibitions showcasing the permanent collection as well as temporary exhibitions. The galleries also include specially designed spaces, such as the new media gallery—designed to present artworks created in video, computer animation, and interactive digital art—and the Art Perch, a north-facing feature window for large-scale art installations.

AMFA's grounds feature works from its growing collection of outdoor sculpture.

Windgate Art School

Established in 1963, the Windgate Art School offers studio instruction in drawing, painting, ceramics, glass, metals, woodworking, and more. Instruction is available for students of all ages and skill levels, with daytime and evening classes offered quarterly, as well as short-term courses and specialty workshops.

Additional features and programmatic areas of the School include the Robyn and John Horn Gallery, dedicated studios for artists-in-residence, and the Art Lawn for outdoor classes and activities.

Performing Arts Program

AMFA's Children's Theatre and Performing Arts program was established in 1979 and provides a range of family-friendly productions in a completely upgraded theater facility. Guests of AMFA can expect a continuation of a decades-long tradition of producing contemporary and classic literary adaptations for the stage, while also presenting productions by national and international touring companies that explore the full spectrum of performing arts for young audiences.

The upgraded theater facility expands the range of performing arts programming available to AMFA audiences, to include musical concerts, dance, film screenings, and more.

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Community Engagement

Community-centered educational programs make full use of AMFA's new building and grounds, with learning experiences and activities for guests of all ages. With a focus on innovation and accessibility, AMFA offers engaging arts programming for everyone.

Next to the Performing Arts Theater, the Governor Winthrop Rockefeller Lecture Hall hosts a variety of formal lectures and presentations, classes, ceremonies, and other events and activities with statewide outreach.

Adjacent to the galleries, the Cultural Living Room is the signature community space of AMFA and a place for guests to gather, relax, and socialize with coffee or a cocktail among panoramic views. The second-floor area serves as a flexible space for programs and events.

The Amerine/Calhoun Glass Box and Terrace are spacious, well-equipped areas for visual and performing arts programs and activities, presentations, and other community-centered events. The Terrace connects to the Event Lawn, which offers options for small and large-scale outdoor activities.

The Terri and Chuck Erwin Collections Research Center offers a scholarly setting to study and learn about the AMFA Foundation Collection, hold seminars and presentations, and convene small groups.

Membership & Support

Museum membership remains the best way to experience all that AMFA has to offer. This community of supporters enjoys unique benefits as well as exclusive access and discounts.

The community-focused Circle Society supports the advancement of the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts and the arts in Arkansas with options to participate within four tiers.

The Collectors Group is AMFA's affinity group, offering a deeper engagement with AMFA by connecting emerging and established collectors to learn about and become inspired by new opportunities and trends in the art world.

The 2023 Society celebrates AMFA's most philanthropic donors who annually contribute transformative gifts of \$15,000 and above. These generous donations support more robust exhibitions, educational programming, and statewide outreach.

In addition to annual giving, AMFA offers unique corporate partnership and sponsorship opportunities for specific arts programs. From exhibitions and community engagement to special events and theatrical performances, AMFA has sponsorship packages—ranging from \$15,000 to \$100,000—that can be customized.

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Museum Store

The Museum Store is a premier destination for thoughtfully selected artist- and artisan-made objects. The store celebrates the design, landscape, and art on view at AMFA—offering exclusive merchandise featuring signature works.

Facility Rentals

AMFA's facility rental program offers private use of its indoor and outdoor spaces, attentive service, and elegant in-house catering. AMFA is a premier venue for special occasions, weddings, receptions, corporate gatherings, and so much more.

Dining

Park Grill, AMFA's full-service restaurant, has indoor, outdoor, and private dining options with beautiful views of the Museum's grounds and MacArthur Park. Conveniently located adjacent to the Park Entrance, the restaurant serves contemporary American fare inspired by local and seasonal ingredients.

Admission

General admission to AMFA is always free. Museum hours are as follows: Tuesday from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Wednesday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., Saturday from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., and Sunday from 12:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Accessibility

AMFA is compliant with accessibility code ANSI A117.1, as well as with all federal, state, and city life safety and building code regulations.

In addition to free parking on site, AMFA is accessible by Little Rock METRO bus route 6 on Commerce Street and route 23 on Ninth Street.

Media Contact

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