

The Nasher (In Your Neighborhood)

Stephen Becker | October 18, 2013 8:20 AM



One of the biggest art shows of the fall might be taking place in your neighborhood. That's because 10 public artworks commissioned by the Nasher Sculpture Center will be open to the public beginning Saturday. It's part of an effort for the Nasher to have an impact beyond its downtown space

Click the map above to explore an interactive Nasher XChange map.

Dallas artist Vicki Meek is anxiously opening a wooden crate. Inside are the finished versions of a series of historical markers she designed.

"Wowie, zowie," was her reaction upon seeing them for the first time. "Nice. Oh my God – yeah, they're exactly as I made them."

The poster-size collages feature important African-American figures in Dallas' cultural and intellectual life. They're not unlike something you'd see in a museum or gallery. But that's not where you'll find them.

Instead, they'll be displayed on the campus of Paul Quinn College in Southern Dallas. The school is the former home of another historically black college – Bishop College – which closed in 1988.

"I thought it was significant to have the site that I'm referencing be the place where my project would take place," she said.

That's the idea behind [Nasher XChange](#), which marks the Nasher Sculpture Center's 10th anniversary. Each of the 10 public art pieces that make up the program are what art world types call "sight responsive." In other words, they play nicely with the spot where they live.

And they'll live all over town: at Fish Trap Lake in West Dallas, in the Oak Cliff Gardens and Vickery Meadow neighborhoods, as well as at the University of Texas at Dallas and Dallas City Hall.

Los Angeles artist Ruben Ochoa's piece, *Flock in Space*, is a concrete-and-steel sculpture that will be at the Trinity River Audubon Center. Ochoa says he's referencing the wooded spot's history as an illegal dumping ground. "I just hope when the work gets installed, it doesn't get dwarfed by the amazing blue skies and all the forest here," he said this summer when he was in town to unveil plans for the piece. "I'm not interested in consuming the whole space but just being a part of the space."

Only one of the pieces – a sound sculpture by New York artist Alfredo Jaar – will actually be located at the Nasher. Getting out into the community is one of the pillars of Nasher XChange.

"It sort of invites a two-way conversation," says Nasher director Jeremy Strick. "We can go out in the communities, we can invite people back here. If people have some sense of what we do where they live or where they work, perhaps they will be more interested or comfortable coming inside our museum."

Vicki Meek, the Dallas artist who also manages the South Dallas Cultural Center, says that's what she told Nasher officials when they consulted her about the project.

"I like the idea of an institution – an art institution – expanding itself beyond its four walls," she said. "I've always loved the notion that if people can experience art in their neighborhoods, then they're much more likely to support art institutions that are not in their neighborhood. When it's in the neighborhood, things don't seem quite as daunting, as intimidating."

It's the same idea that led Ray Nasher, the center's founder, to display some of his collection at the shopping mall he developed, NorthPark Center.

"Ray Nasher liked to say that, 'art is for everybody.' But the sad truth is: not everyone gets to go to a museum," Strick said. "More people have been exposed to significant art at NorthPark than anywhere else. 26 million people a year go through it – more than double the attendance at the Louvre."

XChange pieces will be on display through Feb. 16, 2014, though Strick says some of the pieces may remain at their respective sites permanently.

- See more at: <http://artandseek.net/2013/10/18/the-nasher-in-your-neighborhood/#sthash.YDL9FXpx.dpuf>