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TOP
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10 Dallas Dudes
You've Probably
Dated
By Vanessa
Quintan



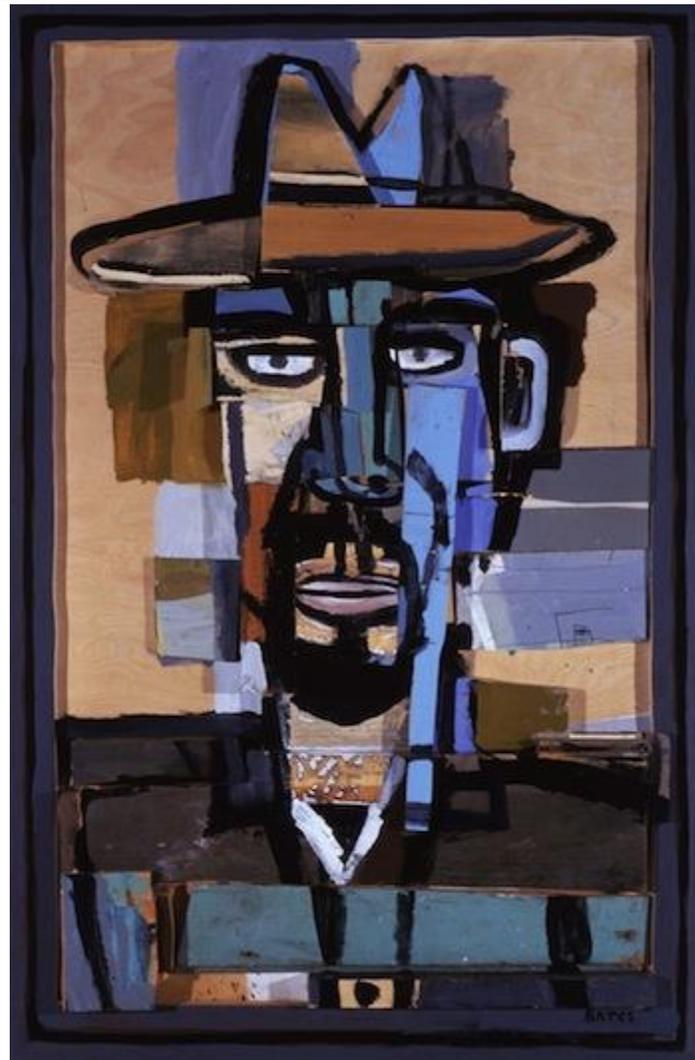
I Spoke at Oral
Fixations Last
Night and I'm...
By Gavin Cleaver



17 Awesome
Things To Do in
Dallas This...
By Jamie
Laughlin

Five (not so) Touchable Artworks at the Nasher's David Bates Retrospective

By [Lauren Smart](#) Tue., Feb. 11 2014 at 7:00 AM



Not your ordinary canvas ...

There's a cool museum collaboration happening between Dallas' [Nasher Sculpture Center](#) and Fort Worth's [Modern Art Museum](#) and it's in the name of a local artist. Painter, sculptor and sketch artist David Bates spent the last 40 years capturing the spirit of South in his varied mediums. Both exhibits opened this weekend, so I popped into the Nasher and spent about an hour observing the abstract facial features of his self-portraits, the floral still lifes that appear sharp to the touch, the nudes that very obviously recall pieces by Picasso and Matisse. And no, you can't touch the art, but his multi-layered wall reliefs and textured sculptures might make you impulsively reach out your fingers.

Self Portrait with a Hat

One of the recurring themes in Bates' work is his own face. Of course, it is an abstracted version of himself, with glaring eyes and an angular face. From a distance, his self-portrait (above) looks like a flat painting on a canvas, but as you approach it, it becomes clear that it is actually stacked blocks of metal and wood painted in shades of blue and brown.



Magnolia

I stood in front of this piece for a very long time, unable to quite understand what was so captivating about the shades of gray. At any moment, I expected the painting to bloom into color. It didn't, but I did learn that this gray scale technique is known as grisaille.



Nasher Sculpture Center

Female Head - R.P.

If there's a defining quality to Bates' work it is this sense that things are unfinished. Certain pieces makes viewers feel as though they caught the artist halfway through a piece, even though its placement in a museum signals that this is the finished product. His work in white plaster makes me think of a maquette, or a sculptural first draft. It provokes the question, *When is art really finished?* With the follow-up question, *Can I touch it?*



Nasher Sculpture Center

Venus III

His bronze nude series draws very clear inspiration from Matisse. Only less polished and more touchable.



My awesome iPhone

Woodpeckers

If you've exhausted the ground level galleries, head downstairs to see another full room of Bates' sculptures, paintings, sketches and more. Before you head to the cafe for a glass of wine or call it a day, don't miss these cute red woodpeckers tucked underneath the stairs.