

[Arts & Culture News](#)

Everything You Need to Know about XChange, the Nasher's Massive City-Wide Art Project

By [Jamie Laughlin](#) Thu., Oct. 17 2013 at 8:01 AM

Categories: [Arts & Culture News](#)

Dallas still faces a few hurdles before it can achieve its culture-hub destiny. The biggest of those are public perception and readiness: Until we want to be a city that engages with art, we'll continue courting an international audience rather than a unified local one. How do we do it? Increased accessibility. The Dallas Museum of Art's switch to free admission and Friends program is fundamental: It changes the culture, transforming the experience from a consumer-driven model to something we simply do.

The other way to increase arts awareness is by spurring casual dialogue. Most people are terrified to talk about art, and that can change. Public art is the perfect vehicle for that. When you encounter something new, like that [giant eyeball sculpture](#), what do you do? You snap a photo of it. You filter it. You share it. You Tweet it, 'gram it or Facebook it. You start a conversation about art.

This weekend you can see more public art in two days in Dallas than you might in a month in New York or Chicago. On Friday night the [Aurora Project](#) returns to convert 68 acres of pedestrian-friendly art space into a multi-sensory awakening, where sculptures and performances glow, bend or make music.

On Saturday morning, [Nasher Xchange](#) is revealed, making Dallas the site of the largest public art offering ever funded by a museum. Ten commissioned works open around the city. You'll either download the [guide app off iTunes](#) and tour the things, or you'll encounter them secondhand on social media.

Familiarity is a big deal. Once your friends read a newsfeed about Lara Almarcegui's [buried house](#), or see a Vine of you plunking [a virtual coin into the fountain at NorthPark](#), they learn a little about it. When they encounter it, they guide their crew through it. Then they take their own pictures.

Soon, you have an entire city talking about and experiencing art together.

[Nasher Xchange](#) celebrates the sculpture center's 10-year anniversary with 10 pieces of public art positioned around the city. Some you'll need to experience on select days, while others you can visit at your leisure. Here's what you'll see, post and discuss by its closing.



You'll find the baby scream pavilion in the Nasher Sculpture Center Garden

Alfredo Jaar, *Music (Everything I know I learned the day my son was born)* , at the Nasher

This sound piece by the Chilean installation artist targets what it means for an institution to age, grow and reflect on a decade within a community by doing something weird. Really weird. Jaar is recording the first cries of (participating) babies born between October 1, 2013, and February 1, 2014, at Dallas hospitals, then he's adapting those sounds into an evolving piece of music. The growing chorus will pipe through a pavilion at the Nasher allowing our city's newest residents to be both visitors and active participants.

In addition to focusing on Dallas' growth and continued renewal, all participating babies received a newly created Lifetime Nasher Membership -- which you gotta admit is pretty dope.



Photo by Allison V. Smith

Rick Lowe's open-air markets unite the Vickery Meadow community

Rick Lowe, *Trans.lation: Vickery Meadow*

Houston's [famous artist/activist](#), and the man responsible for rebuilding the area's [Third Ward](#) with his Project Row Houses, Lowe [has been at work](#) in our own entrenched melting pot, [Vickery Meadow](#), a three-square-mile bend of roughly 100 apartment buildings where 27 languages converge. The area is known as much for its crime rates as its extensive cultural diversity, a combination that's kept neighbors from communicating with one another.

The project is grassroots distilled. Lowe's mission is to unite this culturally and verbally disparate neighborhood through arts education, food and sense of community, culminating in a series of five open-air public markets happening in Vickery Meadow on select Saturdays during the length of Xchange's run (October 19 to February 16).

The first of those events happens opening day. Months of labor resulted in crafted, painted and sculpted items to be sold, and the day also includes less commerce-driven offerings like dancing and music. It's a way for neighbors to honor their cultural legacies and for those who don't spend time in Vickery Meadow to learn more about the world through the experiences of its inhabitants.

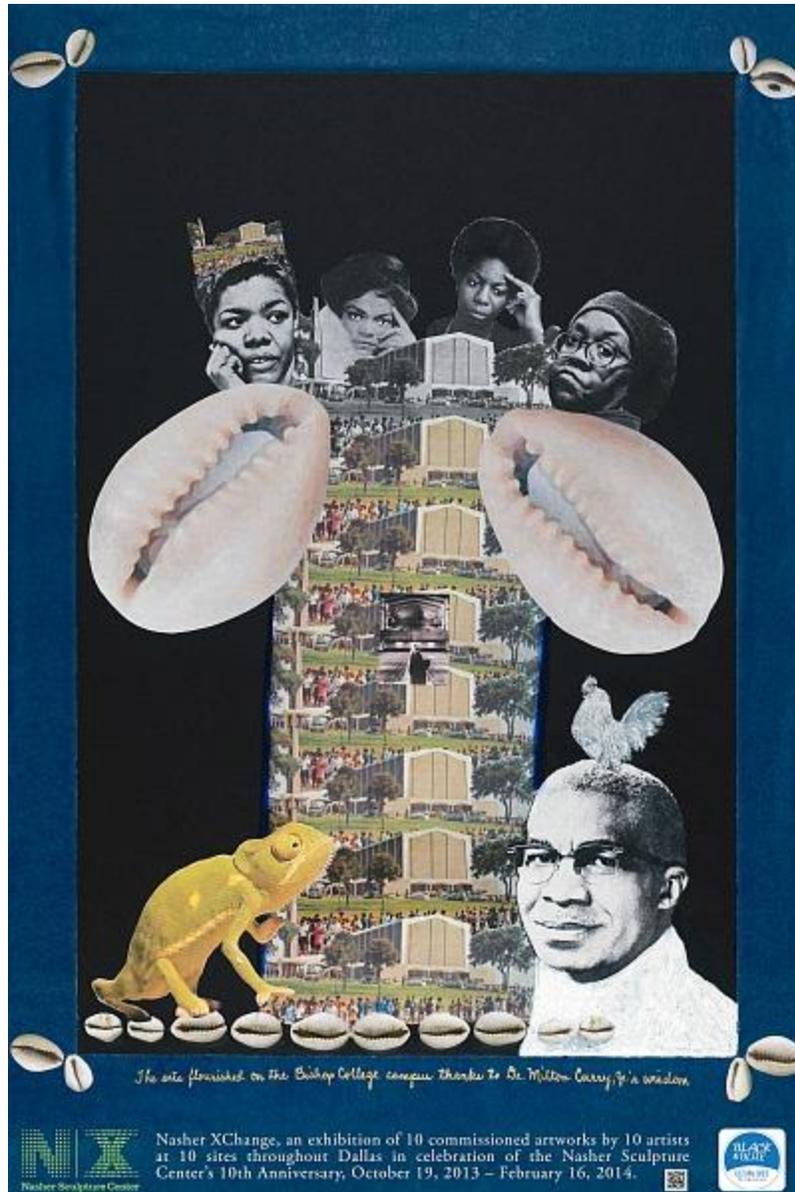


Rachel Harrison, *Moore to the point*

Harrison isn't known for public art; this is her first major commissioned project. But she's a renegade, and we like a wild card.

The New York-based talent found inspiration in an existing part of the city's collection, Henry Moore's "The Dallas Piece," which you know as the bronze pelvic bones resting in front of City Hall.

Surrounded by guard rails and going unnoticed by pedestrians, Harrison declared Moore's work undervalued. Also, it's meant to be explored by walking through it, which nobody does. Those barricades have been removed and she's built a giant pink arrow to point at Moore's sculpture -- so consider this one a two-fer. (Pro tip: There's an app called "Culture Now" that tours you through Dallas' existing public art.)



Vicki Meek channel's one college's history through another's present

Vicki Meek, *Black & Blue: Cultural Oasis in the Hills*

Meek is the only local artist creating [a solo work for the series](#), and she's known as much for her rabble-rousing as her artwork. The South Dallas Cultural Center manager looks at the historical legacy of Bishop College, South Dallas' once-treasured educational cornerstone, for *Black & Blue*. Many only knew of the institution in its darker years, when it was allowed to unceremoniously decay, then finally closed its doors in 1988. Bishop's earlier reputation for exceptional higher education has since been picked up by the hilltop's current occupants, Paul Quinn College. Meek will use her public art platform to channel one through the other.

She's made a series of commemorative historical markers, reminders that before its fall from power, Bishop was a vibrant salon for international idea exchange. Using both physical and digital artwork, Meek tells the rarely heard story of how Bishop College brought in the world's brightest minds, like

Maya Angelou, Alex Haley and Poet Laureate Gwendolyn Brooks; spurred the creation of treasured city assets Dallas Black Dance Theatre and the African American Museum; and lifted up the city's post-segregation black community and ushered in a new era of public service, dialogue and activism.



Photo by Tom Jungerberg

Lara Almarcegui, Buried House

This Spanish-born artist likes [to work big](#), and to leverage destruction as reflection. In Dallas she's working with Habitat for Humanity to address blight and its ability to weaken neighborhoods.

Dallas' home ownership rate is 19.3 percent below the state average, and little is being done to improve rental dwellings. That means each year poor neighborhoods decrease in value while the number of abandoned properties rises.

Almarcegui selected Oak Cliff Gardens for the project. The area ranks high in blight, so she's worked with Dallas Habitat to select a property that's scheduled for demolition. Once knocked down, portions deemed non-environmentally safe were removed, and the rest buried. The remaining mountain of earth is climbable to encourage viewer interaction. At 2226 Exeter Avenue, Almarcegui hopes to give Dallas a vantage point for reflection through public art. And once Xchange ends on February 16, Habitat will use the space as its needs demand, cycling the property from blight to art to treasured home.

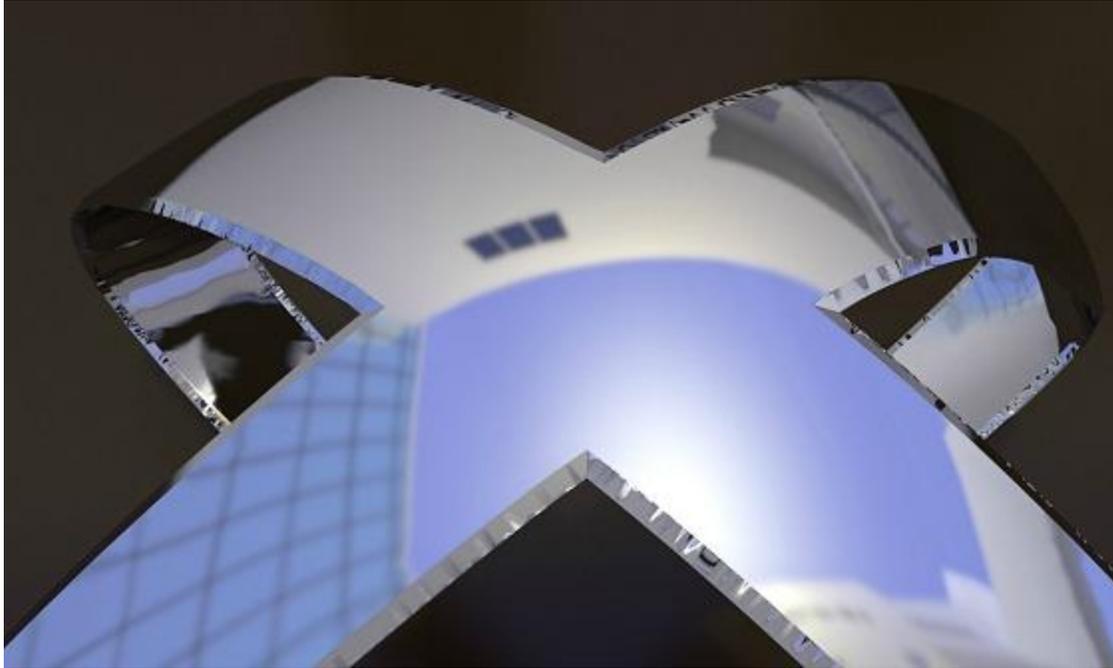


Early digital rendering of *Fountainhead*

Charles Long, *Fountainhead*

This sculpture could be [science-fiction source material](#). Housed in NorthPark Center, an area that's already established itself as an art and commerce amalgamate, Long fuses new media with ritual, then tosses in an element of monetary exchange. The end result is a large, chalice-shaped wishing well.

Rather than recycling water, projections of dollar bills gurgle up from within then cascade down, pouring fluidly along its sides. Also acting as a funds generator, viewers make donations for Dallas CASA, the North Texas Food Bank and Bookmarks (a branch of the Dallas library) in exchange for flipping a "virtual coin" into the fountain. When the projection lands into the "water" pool, it disturbs the digital dollar bills, creating a splash. That arc of activity causes both a primary and secondary viewing experience, where the donor sets in motion a point of interactivity between the art and those gathered around him.



X (detail), computer rendering, Liz Larner, 2013

Liz Larner, X

University of Texas Dallas' new Arts and Technology Building is a nexus for the convergence of arts, humanities, science and engineering curricula. Larner utilizes space, line and form to represent the potential of that reach through sculpture. Her piece, a bowing, mirror-polished X created out of stainless steel, summarizes that intersection.

Derived through digital mapping technology, Larner honors the work being done in Dallas to foster a new generation of talents, while paying homage to our city's tech-rich legacy.



Concept sketch Ruben Ochoa's Nasher XChange project at the Trinity River Audubon Center

Ruben Ochoa, *Flock in Space*

Nature's resilience is Ochoa's muse. He's built a formation of 100 birds out of concrete and steel and set them to soar at the Trinity River Audubon Center. Before it was restored and retrofitted for preservation, this spot was an illegal dumping site. Ochoa used crude posts and footings from chain-link fences and transformed them into art, referencing the Audubon Center's history and present condition, as well as its role as gateway to the largest urban hardwood forest in the United States.



2. Artist's conception of an onscreen television schedule during the broadcast stage of Good/Bad's Curtains project.

Good/Bad Art Collective, *CURTAINS*

After a 10-year hiatus, a New York split-off and probably a lot of beers downed, [Good/Bad returns](#) as one of two locals tapped to build public art for Xchange. *CURTAINS*, played out at Bryan Tower, a 40-story downtown office building, is a one-night-only affair -- appropriate for a group known for creating fleeting "you had to be there" events.

Pop in from 2 to 10 p.m. to participate in the filming, which will then be shaped into a 28-minute infomercial. The finished product will air on your boob tube, broadcast on late night and early morning timeslots in local, regional and national markets. Sorry, dudes, Netflix ain't got this.



Early pier rendering by the artist

Ugo Rondinone, *dear sunset*

The Switzerland-born, New York-based artist creates large-scale sculptures that replicate poetry. He's chosen Fish Trap Lake, a small body of water on a 30-acre site owned by the Dallas Housing Authority, for his Xchange addition, and as the name implies, you should see it in evening light.

He's built a simple wooden pier extending into the water and painted it in hues complementary for a Texas sunset. Designed to encourage commune with nature, this piece is rooted in artful engagement. Escape the concrete and step out on the dock: Boom, you're inside a painting.