

Nasher Sculpture Center



The Nasher Sculpture Center Announces *Nasher Public: Jóhann Eyfells*

In his last 20 years of life, the Icelandic artist made Fredericksburg, Texas his home, creating enigmatic forms from voids in the earth.

DALLAS, Texas (August 6, 2025) – The Nasher Sculpture Center announces its next iteration of Nasher Public in its free Public Gallery, *Nasher Public: Jóhann Eyfells*. The exhibition, curated by guest curator Gavin Morrison, is on view through October 26, 2025.

Jóhann Eyfells (1923–2019) was born in Reykjavik, Iceland but spent most of his life in the United States. He served as an art professor at the University of Central Florida, Orlando from 1969 until his retirement in 1999. In 2002, following the death of his wife—the artist Kristín Halldórsdóttir—he moved to a small ranch outside of Fredericksburg, Texas. During his time in the United States, he maintained a close relationship with the country of his birth and represented Iceland at the 45th Venice Biennale in 1993.

This exhibition at the Nasher Sculpture Center consists of a selection of Cairns, a body of work that Eyfells returned to repeatedly throughout his career. These sculptures were created by pouring various molten metals into the ground; the liquid pushes through the gaps and fissures in the earth to create a cast of negative space. This method allowed Eyfells to somewhat distance himself from the creative act and insert an element of chance. Formed in the voids of the ground, the Cairns evoke the notion that matter is mostly composed of empty space. The works are lyrical representations of Eyfells’s philosophical thinking about the nature of physical matter and artistic practice, intrigued by the scale of temporal processes in the natural world and humanity’s relationship to it.

In choosing to refer to these works as Cairns, Eyfells suggests that they are part of a journey: throughout Iceland, travelers would traditionally create stone stacks intermittently along the length of a path as it crossed a wilderness. These waymarkers were invaluable when the often-extreme weather conditions led the paths to be obscured.

Listasafn Íslands, the National Gallery of Iceland, recently acquired much of the estate of Jóhann Eyfells and the works will be shipped to Iceland later this year. This exhibition can be thought of as Eyfells’s farewell to America, with the Cairns marking the path.

Nasher Public: Jóhann Eyfells is organized by the Nasher Sculpture Center and curated by guest curator Gavin Morrison.

For high-resolution images, please click the link below

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/ol30vr1pfe5gfe5nvomx5/AO96zHyvvv0fsH1eS9v4ytU?rlkey=kr2tgy278ue85z8wng86galp2&st=wmq0teuq&dl=0>

About Jóhann Eyfells

Jóhann Eyfells was born in Reykjavík, Iceland in 1923 and died in Fredericksburg, Texas in 2019. In 1944 he left Iceland to study in the USA where he attended University of California, Berkeley; California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland; and he obtained a bachelor's degree in architecture from University of Florida, Gainesville in 1953. During a period in the late 1950s, he lived between New York and Reykjavik. In Iceland, he worked as an architect, teacher, and illustrator while developing his approach to art making. At this time, he began to combine ideas from science and philosophy with his material sculptural understanding; this would lead him to be one of the first artists in Iceland to reject formal abstraction in favor of a more direct form of art making. Eyfells returned to Florida in the 1960s and in 1964 graduated with a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Florida, Gainesville. For over thirty years, beginning in 1969, Eyfells was a Professor of Art at the University of Central Florida, Orlando. Upon his retirement, and the death of his wife Kristín Halldórsdóttir, he moved to a 10-acre ranch outside of Fredericksburg in the search for more space in which to expand his sculpture practice. He continued to make art until his death in 2019 aged 96.

His work has been exhibited widely, including a retrospective at the National Gallery Iceland, 1992; representing Iceland at the Venice Biennale in 1993 (with Hreinn Friðfinnsson); and a solo exhibition, *Jóhann Eyfells: Palpable Forces* at Reykjavík Art Museum in 2019. His work has also been included in exhibitions at Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark; Malmö Konsthall, Sweden; Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Denmark; and The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington DC.

About Gavin Morrison

Gavin Morrison is a writer and curator who lives in Dallas. He is currently completing a book on Donald Judd's relationship with Iceland and will curate an exhibition of the architectural drawings of Donald Judd and Hörður Ágústsson for Listasafn Íslands, Reykjavík, Iceland in January 2026.

About Nasher Public

Nasher Public is an ongoing, two-pronged public art initiative which aims to generate access to public art by North Texas artists at the Nasher and throughout the greater Dallas community. The project launched first at the Nasher in a newly formed gallery, presenting monthly exhibitions, followed by an ongoing series of offsite exhibitions in partnership with area businesses.

About the Nasher Sculpture Center

Located in the heart of the Dallas Arts District, the Nasher Sculpture Center is home to the Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection, one of the finest collections of modern and contemporary sculpture in the world, featuring more than 500 masterpieces by Brancusi, Calder, de Kooning, di Suvero, Giacometti, Basquiat, Hepworth, LeWitt, Matisse, Miró, Moore, Picasso, Rodin, Serra, and Shapiro, among others. The Nasher Sculpture Center is open Wednesday through Sunday from 11 am to 5 p.m. Admission is \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors, \$5 for students, and free for children 12 and under and members, and includes access to special exhibitions. For more information, visit www.NasherSculptureCenter.org.