

Nasher Sculpture Center



The Nasher Sculpture Center Announces *Nic Nicosia: Everyday Surreal*, Opening May 2026

25-year survey shines new light on the surprising second half of the noted artist's career

DALLAS, Texas (June 10, 2025) – The Nasher Sculpture Center announces *Nic Nicosia: Everyday Surreal*, a survey of the last 25 years of the artist's five-decade career that reveals the material and conceptual evolution of one of the city's most important living artists. With a fresh focus on his turn to sculpture in the 2010s, the exhibition will feature over 70 three-dimensional works, drawings, photographs, and films made since his mid-career survey in 1999–2000, in an installation evocative of the subtly surreal environments conceived in the artist's work. The exhibition will be on view May 16 – August 16, 2026.

Born in Dallas in 1951, Nic Nicosia came to prominence in the 1980s as part of the Pictures Generation, an unofficial group of artists practicing in the 1970s and 80's who questioned the authenticity of images and their role in shaping perceptions. He is best known for his photographs and films depicting everyday life—moments quietly quirky or completely gone awry—with costumed actors in brightly-colored sets including real objects with artist-made simulacra and hand-drawn or painted images. These photographic works exemplified a unique vision that dove-tailed nicely with broader Postmodern trends in contemporary art also represented in the work of artists such as Cindy Sherman, Laurie Simmons, and Jeff Wall, earning him notice in important exhibitions such as the Whitney Biennial in New York (1983 and 2000), *Image Fabrique* at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris (1983), and Documenta IX in Kassel, Germany (1992).

In 1999 the Contemporary Art Museum, Houston organized a major survey of Nicosia's work, *Real Pictures: 1979–1999*, that travelled to numerous museums in the US including the Dallas Museum of Art and the Cleveland Museum of Contemporary Art. Another retrospective was presented by CASA Salamanca, Spain, in 2003. Seeing his work summarized in these exhibitions prompted the artist to take a fresh look at his trajectory, while a series of protracted health issues prompted new observations on life. *Nic Nicosia: Everyday Surreal* takes as its focus the notable shift in his work since his mid-career surveys, marked by a significant broadening of his practice to include sculpture and drawing. While maintaining a buoyant whimsy, his work became more philosophical, exploring themes of time, memory, and the psychological bends at the edges of everyday reality.

Nicosia's early photography relied on the production of elaborate hand-made objects and constructed sets, as well as numerous assistants and actors. In 2001, Nicosia, working largely on his own, turned to making the settings for his pictures on a smaller scale, constructing models of rooms, collaging them with images taken elsewhere, and populating them with small, sculpted installations. In 2009 –2019 he began making sculptures consistently, experimenting with paper clay and hydrocal to produce eccentric personages, whimsical wire portraits, and anonymous male figures taking on various poses and personas. Many of these works were made independently of his photography, but they soon began to populate the models for his staged photographs and, more recently, real domestic interiors, resulting in hand-collaged and rephotographed images that confound reality and artifice. More recently Nicosia has expanded this exploration to include cast metal sculptures, such as *bighands* (2011), an eight-foot-tall steel sculpture in the Nasher's permanent collection.

Nicosia's drawings similarly explore elements of time and its limitations. A drawing from 2015 traces the route from Santa Fe to Dallas 77 times to create a simple meditation on distance, time, repetition, and movement, while other drawings mark the seconds in a day, or the first 65 years of a life. Still others record the random flow of thoughts and ideas that pass through one's mind over time, appearing as doodles or blocks of words, sometimes recorded over spans of several months.

The major exhibition of a Dallas native holds special significance in the summer of 2026 during which the region will host nine games for the 2026 FIFA World Cup and be the location for the games' broadcast center, welcoming guests from around the world.

"The Nasher Sculpture Center is delighted to showcase the inventive work of Nic Nicosia," says Director Carlos Basualdo. "His whimsical artistic practice makes us reflect about the contradictory nature of our reality, pointing to universal themes while pursuing highly personal subjects. This close look at his evolving practice promises to stir curiosity and introspection in equal measure."

Nic Nicosia: Everyday Surreal is organized by Nasher Sculpture Center Chief Curator Jed Morse who will also serve as the editor of a lavishly illustrated catalogue, featuring new scholarly essays, that will be published to accompany the exhibition.

For images, please click the link below:

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/uaotdotjfs1hzwyzi4v4/AIWt_JTcXuhitNRgkvkWn4p0?rlkey=0u2u754hnqq46rz0w41enqdup&st=kcgiikx9&dl=0

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About Nic Nicosia

Born in Dallas in 1951, Nic Nicosia is perhaps the most successful artist native to the city. His work has been included in numerous major national and international surveys including two Biennials at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, (in 1983 and 2000), Documenta IX in Kassel, Germany (1992), and the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (1983). He has also been the focus of a major survey exhibition (Real Pictures: 1979–1999) organized by the Contemporary Art Museum, Houston, that travelled from 1999–2001 to numerous national museums including the Dallas Museum of Art and the Cleveland Museum of Contemporary Art. Another retrospective was mounted by CASA Salamanca, Spain, in 2003. His work is now included in important museum collections worldwide, including The Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, and Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York; The Los Angeles County Museum of Art and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in California; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, The High Museum, Atlanta, and the Dallas Museum of Art; as well as the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, and SMAK (Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst), Gent, Belgium. Nicosia is represented by Erin Cluley Gallery, Dallas.

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 pm. 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.