

**ART & CULTURE**

For decades, Las Vegas has occupied a singular place in America's cultural spectrum. Showgirls and neon lights are some of the most familiar emblems of Las Vegas' culture, but they are only part of the story.

In recent years, Las Vegas has secured its place on the cultural map. Visitors can immerse themselves in the cultural offerings that are unique to the destination, delivering a well-rounded dose of art and culture.

**Unique Las Vegas Culture**

Swiss artist Ugo Rondinone’s colorful, public artwork **Seven Magic Mountains** is a two-year exhibition located in the desert outside of Las Vegas, which features seven towering dayglow totems comprised of painted, locally-sourced boulders. Each “mountain” is over 30 feet high to exhibit the presence of color and expression in the desert of the Ivanpah Valley. The installation was produced by the Art Production Fund, New York and Nevada Museum of Art, Reno.

Making its debut during the 2015 Life is Beautiful Festival, the **Art Motel** featured interactive installations and eclectic showcases of artwork during the annual three-day music festival. The entire motel including its rooftop and courtyard, came to life as a showcase for dozens of renowned and local artists as they created and presented a diverse exhibition with visual and multimedia art installations.

The **National Museum of Organized Crime and Law Enforcement** (The Mob Museum) is an interactive museum presenting a bold and authentic view of organized crime's impact on Las Vegas' history and the unique imprint that extended to America and the world. The exhibits, programs and experiences offer multiple perspectives and provide a contemporary, engaging, challenging and educational experience. The $42 million museum is located in the heart of downtown's urban core, and is housed in the former federal courthouse and United States Post Office. The museum opened on Feb. 14, 2012.

Focused on preserving one aspect of Las Vegas' vibrant history, the **Neon Museum** is a collection of more than 150 classic neon signs from the 1930s to present day. The two-acre campus includes an outdoor exhibition space formerly known as the Neon Boneyard and also encompasses a visitors’ center housed inside the former La Concha Motel lobby. Currently 15 refurbished, vintage neon signs are on display throughout downtown Las Vegas.

The **Springs Preserve** opened in 2007 on a 180-acre historic site commonly known as "the birthplace of Las Vegas." The Preserve features historic museums, galleries, outdoor concerts and events, Nevada State Museum, an interpretive trail system, a botanical garden and more.

The **National Atomic Testing Museum** is a repository for one of the most comprehensive collections of nuclear history. The collection includes thousands of rare photographs, videos, artifacts, scientific and nuclear reports, data and one-of-a kind scientist collections from the Nevada Test Site, the Cold War, and nuclear and radiological science and technology. The newest exhibit, Area 51: Myth or Reality, reveals the myths and existing evidence allowing visitors to decide for themselves.

The **Erotic Heritage Museum** is a 24,000-square-foot space featuring permanent exhibits designed to preserve wonders of the erotic imagination as depicted through the artistic expression of love.

**Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition** showcases more than 250 authentic artifacts recovered from two and one-half miles below the surface of the North Atlantic Ocean. Unique to the exhibition at Luxor Hotel & Casino is the crown jewel of the Titanic artifacts, the largest piece ever recovered - the ‘Big Piece.’ This 30-ton piece of the Titanic's starboard hull took nearly two days and more than 40 hours to install in this blockbuster exhibition. In addition, visitors can view more than 20 never-before-seen artifacts including gaming chips, passenger personal papers and a full-scale replica of the famed Grand Staircase.

**BODIES...The Exhibition** at Luxor Hotel & Casino showcases more than 260 body specimens. These real human bodies have been meticulously dissected, preserved through an innovative process and respectfully presented, giving visitors the opportunity to view the beauty and complexity of their own organs and systems.

The **Las Vegas Natural History Museum** in association with the Smithsonian Institution features exhibits on dinosaurs, Egyptian treasures, marine life, international wildlife, wild Nevada, geology and African savannas, rainforests and prehistoric primates.

**The Auto Collections** at The LINQ includes over 250 classic cars that show the evolution from over a century ago. This exhibit features infamous automobiles; such as, the limo President JFK rode before his assassination, the race car from the 1989 Corvette Challenge, the Suburban from “The Sopranos” and the Chrysler Royal that belonged to Johnny Carson.

For nearly 70 years, the **Las Vegas News Bureau** has captured the sights and sounds of the world’s leading destination like no one else, and has played a unique role in promoting Las Vegas by documenting unforgettable images on film. The News Bureau was established in 1947 as part of the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce’s efforts to market Las Vegas as a leisure travel destination. It wasn’t long before the Bureau’s photographers were shooting entertainers backstage, onstage, or staging photos with Harpo Marx, Mickey Rooney or Frank Sinatra. Cheesecake photos – whether featuring showgirls, cocktail waitresses or celebrities such as Jane Mansfield – were among the most popular.

In addition to photography and film, the News Bureau helped to drive the Las Vegas publicity machine with press trips and outreach to journalists from around the world, establishing itself as a trusted resource. Over the years, the News Bureau has amassed one of the most comprehensive photograph and film collections showcasing the history of Las Vegas. The archive includes superstar entertainers and sports figures, world-class concerts and special events, and the ever-evolving skyline. Classic images include “Miss Atomic Bomb” and the classic “Floating Craps Game,” as well as film of Elvis Presley, Liberace, the Rat Pack and other Las Vegas icons. Today, the Las Vegas News Bureau continues to play an important role in marketing Las Vegas as part of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority.

While its primary function continues to be documenting and distributing images to the news media, the News Bureau shares its photo and film collection with the public through community exhibitions. Portions of the News Bureau’s archive can be viewed year round in the Las Vegas Convention Center and at local libraries and public buildings during scheduled exhibitions. Click here for a current event schedule or to join the Las Vegas News Bureau exhibition mailing list. <http://www.lasvegas.com/listing/the-lvcva-presents-exhibitions-from-the-las-vegas-news-bureau-archives/32626/>

**Art for Art's Sake**
In 1998, Steve Wynn surprised many when he decided to open an art gallery in his $1.6 billion hotel-casino, Bellagio. Art critics were skeptical, but the public applauded his efforts when the Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art opened and launched Las Vegas to the forefront of the art scene. With eyes glued to this emerging art center, other reputable art institutions started looking toward Las Vegas. The result: fine art galleries located in the resort corridor, featuring revered masterpieces by celebrated artists.

The ever-changing and evolving **Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art** displays masterpieces from the world’s greatest artists. This gallery features over 45 of Picasso’s work from the 1930s through the 1970s and highlights his evolvement as an artist. “Yousuf Karsh: Icons of the Twentieth Century” opened this past March. This loaned exhibit from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, “Yousuf Karsh: Icons of the Twentieth Century” provides an intimate view into the faces of leading figures in the arts, politics and the Golden Age of Hollywood. The exhibit features over 60 portraits of the most famous and infamous men and women of the last century.

Photographer **Jeff Mitchum’s** Las Vegas gallery at Bellagio's pool promenade features an eclectic collection of the fine art photographer's most treasured images taken during his travels around the world. Mitchum's personal influences are an integral part of this one-of-a-kind gallery. The gallery also displays artifacts, such as one of Sierra Club founder John Muir's original manuscripts, a pair of desert hiking boots that belonged to Ansel Adams that is accompanied by a personal letter from Adams' daughter.

Steve Wynn’s **Wynn** and **Encore** both have noted works of art and elaborate gardens displayed throughout the properties. At the Wynn theater rotunda where the Wynn and Encore hotels meet, Tulips, the stainless steel sculpture created by Jeff Koons, is exhibited. In 2014, Wynn purchased Popeye the Sailor Man sculpture also made by Jeff Koons. Popeye currently stands in the Wynn shopping esplanade and will remain standing in the Las Vegas property until late 2017.

ARIA Resort & Casino has established itself as a cultural destination of worldwide significance with its permanent **Fine Art Collection**. The collection encompasses a multitude of styles and media—ranging from sculptures and paintings to other works of art such as large-scale installations that engage guests on both a visual and intellectual level. The beautiful masterpieces are strategically placed throughout the campus to reveal a world of fascinating experiences at every corner. Artists include Maya Lin, Henry Moore, Frank Stella, Nancy Rubins, Jenny Holzer and more have contributed to this exceptional collection.

**Photo & Go** at The LINQ Promenade is the only specialty "brick and mortar" retailer that offers a full line of great ways to make your favorite photos into unique products for your wall, desk or shelf. Guests can turn their jaw-dropping Las Vegas cell phone pictures into lifelong memories and gifts.

**Red Rock Casino, Resort & Spa**, located off-Strip in the Summerlin area, allows visitors to peruse their collection of fine art, which is displayed throughout the property. Masterpieces from artists such as Robert Indiana, Takashi Murakami, Paul McCarthy and Vik Muniz adorn the walls of the resort's restaurants and lounges.

Fine art in Las Vegas is not confined to the resorts, however. Other galleries thrive elsewhere in town, and serve as gathering points for artists and art aficionados alike. Several notable venues and events make the roster of must-see activities for art buffs visiting Las Vegas. Downtown is also home to a dozen murals created during the Life is Beautiful festival.

**First Friday** in the **18b Arts District**, takes place on the first Friday of each month from 5-11pm. In addition to the programming and block party, the First Friday Foundation provides, as the basis for the event, individual shops and galleries around the neighborhood remain open late to celebrate along with the crowds. Preview Thursday, the night preceding First Friday, provides a sneak peek at gallery openings and new art. The area offers antiques and vintage shops to restaurants and art galleries, including S2 and Main Gallery. Having started in 2002, the event has grown into a premier art event in Las Vegas.

**The Arts Factory**, also located in downtown Las Vegas, houses several artists' studios and contemporary art galleries. The Arts Factory is a 50-year-old commercial warehouse building with traditional bowstring truss architecture and houses a broad range of artists and styles, media and interests. The Arts Factory is also a unique cultural venue that’s hosted over 300 musical concerts, poetry readings, and live theatrical performances.

**Commerce Street Studios** include Circadian Galleries, showing work by Daniel Pearson and guest artists each month, and Blackbird Studios, a cooperative art studio and exhibition space for working artists and rotating exhibits.

**Rue Royale Fine Art** is a fine-art-print maker, housing elaborate 19th-century printing presses used to reproduce works by artists such as Alphonse Mucha, Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, Tom Everhart and Matthew Rinard. The 13,000-square-foot atelier in Las Vegas is one of only a handful of true lithography ateliers left in the world, housing specialized historic equipment and a highly experienced staff of printer/artisans capable of performing these time-honored, fine art printing methods. Rue Royale Fine Art is located at 5530 S. Valley View Blvd. Las Vegas, Nevada, in a 13,000 square foot facility. The Atelier’s Master Printer, Daniel Leeland Woodward has over 20 years’ experience in the production of limited-edition fine art lithographs.

**Amanda Harris Gallery of Contemporary Art**, located on the first floor of downtown’s Soho Lofts, is one of the premier contemporary art galleries in the city. Curated by Harris, the gallery has showcased everything from the sophisticated works of Wess Dahl-Berg to lowbrow street art and is currently showing Angel Delgado’s “Constancy” exhibition.

Art and photography from nationally and internationally recognized artists, students and faculty alike are exhibited at the **University of Nevada, Las Vegas' Donna Beam Fine Art Gallery**.

The **City of Las Vegas Cultural Affairs Division** oversees several arts venues in town, including the Reed Whipple Cultural Center, Charleston Heights Cultural Center, and West Las Vegas Arts Center.

**Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health** is not only a world-leading health facility, but also an architectural wonder. Designed by world-renowned architect **Frank Gehry**, the center’s unique design and welcoming atmosphere act as a tribute to the patients, families and staff who come to the center. Gehry’s main objective when designing the building was to make it memorable; he wished for people to visit, talk, enjoy and partner with the center to help cure brain diseases.

**Zappos’ campus art and mural collections** add a unique taste of urban culture to the workplace, representative of the unique office environment of Zappos. Guests can take tours of Zappos’ murals and art pieces while also exploring hidden areas of the Zappos campus.

**Performing Arts**

The **Las Vegas Philharmonic** is Southern Nevada's only professional symphony orchestra. Founded in 1998 by founding Music Director and Conductor Laureate Harold Weller and long-time Las Vegas arts supporters Susan and Andrew Tompkins, the Las Vegas Philharmonic delights guests of all ages with classical performances, contemporary shows and artistic renditions. At the orchestra's core is 76 contracted professional musicians, many of whom are esteemed educators and who perform in other professional productions in Las Vegas, bringing depth and variety to the organization. The Las Vegas Philharmonic is a seven-time recipient of the Best Performing Arts Group award in the annual Best of Las Vegas poll.

Currently under the artistic direction of James Canfield, the Las Vegas Ballet prides itself on being a world-class ballet company and training academy. Now in its 43rd Season, Nevada Ballet Theatre is a leading attraction in the live performing arts of Southern Nevada. With an ambitious schedule of performances, development of local talent and a commitment to education and outreach, the Nevada Ballet Theatre touches thousands of lives in the Las Vegas Valley every year.

Each year, UNLV features theatre productions, musicals, art exhibits, jazz, classical and chamber music concerts, ballets, opera, lectures, dances and other worldly entertainment.

The campus' performing arts venues, such as the **Judy Bayley Theatre**, **Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall** and the **Black Box Theatre**, feature entertainment of all kinds. Some of the ongoing series include The Charles Vanda Master Series, showcasing the best in classical music and dance; the Allegro Guitar series and the UNLV Visiting Artist Lecture Series, which features nationally and internationally acclaimed artists discussing their work.

**Theater All Around**

Las Vegas provides theater for all tastes. High profile, star-powered shows and touring musical productions continue to make stops in Las Vegas, where they play to packed houses.

Many of the performances on the Las Vegas Strip are among the best and most innovative in the world, from the internationally acclaimed **Cirque du Soleil** (eight resident productions) and **Blue Man Group** (Luxor) to Broadway productions such as **Showstoppers** (Wynn) and "**Rock of Ages**" (Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino).

Community Theater has also received attention from Southern Nevada's residents and visitors alike. Groups such as the **Las Vegas Little Theater**, the local summer stock company **Super Summer Theatre**, the **Rainbow Company Youth Theatre**, as well as local academic institutions UNLV and the **College of Southern Nevada** present plays and musical productions featuring local and up-and-coming talent. The City of Las Vegas also features a comprehensive cultural arts program with events scheduled throughout the year.

**The Smith Center for the Performing Arts** is a public/private partnership that has become the centerpiece of cultural life in Las Vegas. Located within downtown’s 61-acre urban development Symphony Park, the complex features three performance spaces including the 2,050-seat Reynolds Hall complete with inviting lobbies, beautiful balconies and refined acoustics. A tastefully landscaped plaza links the main hall with Boman Pavilion, which houses a cabaret jazz space and a studio theater. Since opening in 2012, The Smith Center has featured performances by resident companies such as Nevada Ballet Theatre and the Las Vegas Philharmonic as well as first-run touring attractions such as “Wicked” and “Billy Elliot the Musical.”