

## **Your Guide to Saturday's Design District Gallery Day: Free Beer. Great Art. Nine Hours.**

Galleried out? Spend Saturday raiding the Gypsy Wagon instead.

Even for veteran gallery hoppers, getting to every opening is limited by time available. We wind up picking and choosing between favorite spaces, artists with the biggest buzz, and which gallery doles out the heaviest pours. (What can I say? I'm cheap.)

The problem is also vexing for gallery owners. They'd like to see new faces pop through. They'd also like those visitors to build a relationship with the art by spending time with it, rather than sprinting off to see it all before everything shuts down. It's a conundrum that got Brian Gibb, owner of The Public Trust, thinking. He just saw two groups who needed each other. Then he played matchmaker.

The result was East Dallas Gallery Day, a lovely June Saturday where eight of East Dallas' most innovative spaces opened at noon and didn't close their doors until 9 p.m. More than a thousand folks showed up, lured further by free beer (it's sponsored by Brooklyn Brewery) and locally made swag (the first 25 in each gallery's door get a free t-shirt!). Now, it's the Design District's turn.

Twelve galleries have risen to the challenge, so this Saturday you have nine hours to visit: Conduit Gallery, Goss-Michael Foundation, Marty Walker Gallery, Cris Worley Fine Arts, Galleri Urbane, Dallas Contemporary, Circuit 12 Contemporary, Red Arrow Contemporary, Cohn Drennan Contemporary, Craighead Green Gallery, Holly Johnson Gallery, and Photographs Do Not Bend Gallery. I put them roughly in geographical order for you, although the final six are all on Dragon Street proper, so feel free to adjust to your mood. (Personally, I like to get the driving out of the way early.)

Here's what you can expect at each:

**Conduit Gallery:** This is a long-stay space for Dallas, a gallery that's weathered every financial storm thrown at the art world, and it's managed to do so by offering a meticulously curated group of artists. Currently I'm most excited about the sculptural exhibition by Mexican-born artist Gabriel Dawe. His statement explains that his textile work -- which utilizes thousands of needles to create a fabric-rich look - is a play on machismo and gender roles in Mexican culture. Namely, that a man shouldn't be sewing. Personally it touches me more on themes of safety, protection and boundaries. See what you take from it on Saturday. You'll also find punchy bright cut and painted collages by Rex Ray as well as intricate woodblock prints by Jill Storthz.

**Goss-Michael Foundation:** Saturday is your very last chance to catch this extraordinary show by British artist Adam McEwen. He's known for toying with pop concepts and minimalism by producing artwork with dastardly undertones. There is no limit to his media choices -- even window units are retold as sculpture.

**Marty Walker Gallery:** You'll see the combined efforts of Anna Membrino and Omar Rodriguez-Graham and how each plays with realism, sculpture within paintings and boundaries. You'll get a balance between

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Rodriguez-Graham's more formal angles and Membrino's morphing, rounded shapes.

Cris Worley Fine Arts: There's something up at Cris Worley right now that looks like that transparent phone from the '80, dissected and laid out, then set off with neon. It's going to make your brain explode.

Galleri Urbane: There is something so delightful and dangerous about Urbane's current exhibition. Animals are created out of taxidermy foam and fitted with motion sensors. Some use surveillance gear like cameras, others emit sound as you pass by, but my favorite piece is a large patch of moss, hung like a tapestry, that breaths and moves based on your motion. It's like walking through a sinister forest and it's fantastic. See it.

Dallas Contemporary: Vienna artist Erwin Wurm has taken over much of the Contemporary's space with his show *Beauty Business*. You'll be pulled into the exhibition's interactive elements, as Wurm likes to infuse performance art, sculpture and photography into one cohesive thread.

Circuit 12 Contemporary: Congrats to this newcomer gallery; its first exhibition, *Dream Continuum*, was recently named 23rd Best Art Exhibit of 2012 (So Far) in a nation-wide list by *Complex Magazine*. I don't know anything about that publication, but it's nice to see Circuit 12 getting some love. The gallery's current show, *Lightening Strikes Twice*, is a whole lotta neon.

Red Arrow Contemporary: I'm in lust with this new Dragon Street gallery. Their current show, *Worth 1000 Words*, is actually worth much more than that. Gary Sweeny's work alone will prove that comedy and art aren't mutually exclusive. If you have a few thousand extra bucks laying around, go ahead and buy something, will ya? I'd like to see this place stick around.

Cohn Drennan: It's an MFA group show in the main viewing space and a video installation in the second, smaller room. Support these artists and see what our newest crop of local talent is bringing to the table.

Craighead Green: There's a lot going on in the Green space. Four very different shows are up by artists of completely varying media. Natalia Ferber's mixed media and giclee on canvases might be the most interesting, although I'm pretty jazzed about Jerry Cabrera's oil paintings that resemble neon-lit sculptures.

Holly Johnson: There are currently two shows at Holly Johnson. In the entry room you'll find *Initialisms* by Jim Martin, which did nothing for me. In the back room you'll find *Freefall* by Jackie Tileston, and that's where things get interesting. *Freefall* resembles the inside of your brain as it teeters between peace and chaos. It's abstract and colorful but at times is firmly rooted in reality. Landmarks appear such as tiny lagoons and fishing villages. They almost feel like memories, and are painted so intricately that you're forced to accept the greater mashing of hue and texture as its own layer of perfection as well. Spend some time with it; you've got nine hours.

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Photographs Do Not Bend: Do me a favor and support this gallery every chance you get. It's a haven of interesting contemporary photography that we would never get to see without this space. Currently, you can catch a couple of great shows, and my favorite is *From Moscow With Love*. It features seven hand-picked Russian artists that PDNB discovered while traveling. Their work is an example of how far photography can go to capture a moment at its apex, just as the lighting is ripe for explosive color or when an animal is posed perfectly on a bed.

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