

The Artists Among Us



BY KAREN LYNCH

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“The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls.” — Pablo Picasso

We spend so much time at airports, don't we? Delayed flights. Layovers. Earlier arrivals, thanks to stepped-up security. Sure, Brookstones, Starbucks and XpresSpa locations make our lag time more enjoyable. But if we purposefully tune in to each airport's art exhibits — the latest trend that is sweeping the terminals — we will be opening the gate to a cultural enrichment renaissance.

“Art and exhibitions are a way for an airport to not only reflect local cul-

ture and heritage, but to also connect with travelers who pass through,” says Angela Gittens, director general of the Airports Council International (ACI). “The selected art and exhibitions differentiate airports and add texture to the traveler's experience.”

Beyond providing an aesthetic value, the ACI has discovered that the presence of art enhances the business traveler's overall perception of an airport. “Airport art gives business travelers in particular a sense of place and time, which

is needed because of the often frenetic pace they keep,” says Gittens.

“For me, the amazingly fun element of artwork in an airport environment is when people are unaware they're even interacting with art,” said Angie Tabor, manager of communications for Port Columbus International Airport.

With all the benefits to housing art in such a well-trafficked public place, it is no wonder (but perhaps a bit surprising) that in the U.S., local governments are facilitating the growing art programs

Above: “Samson,” is a sculpture comprised of two 23-foot towers of stacked luggage rising above Terminal A Baggage Claim at Sacramento International Airport. It has been a passenger favorite and a popular photo subject since its installation in 1998. Artist Brian Goggin took three months to assemble the two 700 suitcase towers, using bags donated by Sacramento area residents.



International Terminal, Beach Blanket Babylon, San Francisco Skyline Hat



Brushstrokes in Flight, a 26-foot tall sculpture by the late Roy Lichtenstein at the Port Columbus International Airport.

“For me the amazingly fun element of artwork in an airport environment is when people are unaware they’re even interacting with art, such as when travelers are seated around Brushstrokes in Flight created by internationally-acclaimed artist Roy Lichtenstein,” said Angie Tabor, Manager of Communications for Port Columbus International Airport



Eelke J. Eelkema, Still Life with Flowers and Fruit, c. 1815-30, at the Rijksmuseum annex at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol

MORE to EXPLORE

Athletic Endeavors

Just do it! Visit London Heathrow, that is. As the officially designated airport of the 2012 Olympics, they will feature their High Performance Art Exhibition with sport and Olympic-themed art by leading and emerging British artists (based in Terminal 5 until the end of January next year).

Scavenger Hunts

It is like “Where’s Waldo?” Visit the Denver International Airport website (flydenver.com), and find a scavenger hunt for each of four airport locations. Then, scout out answers to such questions as: Find the musician on the floor at the east end of A Gates. What instrument is he playing? What astronaut has a statue on B Gates?

Patriotic Pictures

Oh, say can you see? More than 40 photos from members of the Professional Photographers Society of Greater Washington are on display in The Gateway Gallery at Dulles through October 2011. The exhibit is called “Washington: More Than Monuments” and features photos of the National Mall, fireworks above the Capital dome and the famed cherry blossoms.

at our airports. Many airport-art programs benefit from “percent for art” ordinances that require developers to fund public art where private or specialized funding of public art is unavailable, usually .5% to 2% of construction costs.

“Airport art makes those long, moving sidewalks more interesting,” says QRCA member Siri Lynn of Idea Exchange. “It makes me feel human to take a moment and appreciate a display of some sort, whether it is the moving neon lights at O’Hare or the origami birds and glass blocks at Denver International that I glimpsed just recently.”

Let’s not overlook performance art; it too has a place on the airport scene. Musicians and theatrical performers of all kinds are starting to become fixtures in some airports. “The band outside

customs at Grand Cayman Island airport — now that is a way to welcome strangers to your home,” says Lynn. “That is what airport art does for me: it makes me feel welcomed, like the local community wants me to get a glimpse of what they are really like in that little slice of the world.”

While it is not necessary for you to stop, examine, critique and/or formally appreciate the art you happen upon — its presence alone will allow you to reap benefits — you might want to leave happenstance to other circumstances and seek out the work at the following international airports.

Amsterdam

How cool is it that the Dutch national museum, the Rijksmuseum, has an actual annex built within the Schiphol

Amsterdam international airport? This museum opened in 2002 and was the first of this kind, setting the stage for other national institutions to follow its example. Imagine, an annex to the Smithsonian at Dulles! Awesome.

The Rijksmuseum Schiphol permanently showcases a collection of Dutch masters from the Golden Age. In addition, the annex hosts three temporary exhibitions. Dutch Flowers, still-life depictions of garden bouquets that only the most affluent could afford in the 17th century Holland, is on display through September 2011.

The Rijksmuseum Schiphol is free to all visitors and is open daily. It also has a contemporary museum shop with Dutch designs and Rijksmuseum souvenirs.

San Francisco

What started as an initiative to humanize the airport environment has become a place for San Francisco to make a first

impression to the world as a significant international gateway to the United States. While not a national museum per se, the San Francisco International

Airport (SFO) Museum became the first and only museum located at an American airport to receive accreditation from the American Association of Museums.

Today, the SFO Museum features more than twenty galleries. Art, history, science and cultural exhibitions are always on rotation. SFO also hosts the San Francisco Airport Commission Aviation Library and Louis A. Turpen Aviation Museum, housing a permanent collection dedicated to preserving the history of commercial aviation.

Coinciding with the airport's round-the-clock hours of operation, museum exhibitions are on view 24 hours a day. The San Francisco Airport Commission Aviation Library and Louis A. Turpen Aviation Museum is open Sunday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

CREATIVE EXCURSIONS

- Force a connection between your current research project and the exhibit in front of you. In what way is one painting (or sculpture or photograph) similar to your client's brand, concept or package design?
- Develop a new technique based on what you see. How can you utilize that medium (oils, clay, pastels, colored pencils, photography, etc.) in your next project, literally or figuratively?
- Purchase a card deck (or something else) from the gift shop to use for future projective exercises.
- Reflect on your career. Which artist best personifies yourself as a researcher? In what way are you most like Escher, Dali, Van Gogh, Monet, Matisse, Pollock, Warhol... or someone else?



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How cool is it that the Dutch national museum, the Rijksmuseum, has an actual annex built within the Schiphol Amsterdam international airport?

Phoenix

According to its website, the Phoenix Airport Museum also has a mission — “to enhance the public’s experience by creating memorable environments in the airport system that promote Arizona’s unique artistic and cultural heritage.” That’s why a collection of almost 600 works of art is on display at the Sky Harbor, Deer Valley and Goodyear airports. The organization has been collecting art since the early 1960s. A government ordinance even states that up to 1% of capital improvement projects should be spent on art commissions and purchases.

At Sky Harbor, in each terminal (and in the rental-car center) you will find ceramic tile and mixed-media murals, metal and ceramic sculptures, photographic and digital prints, acrylic and oil paintings, and fine-art prints using various techniques. All Sky Harbor exhibitions are free and viewable 24 hours daily. Most are pre-security. Deer Valley and Goodyear Airports are viewable between 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

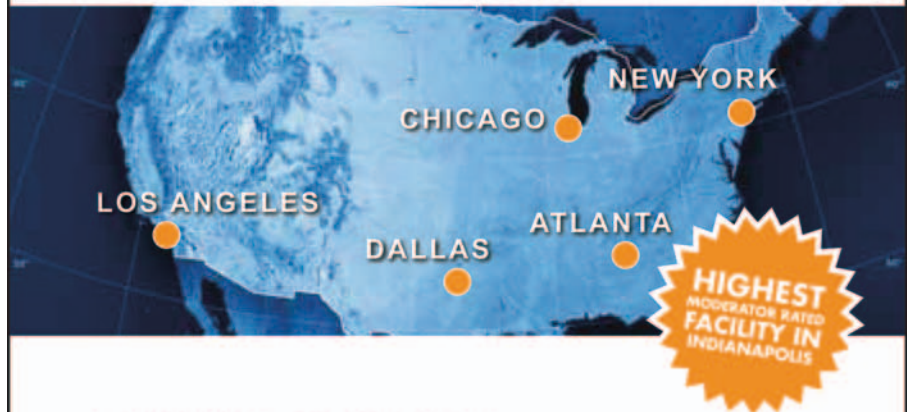
Atlanta

Atlanta... huge airport, right? Approximately 250,000 travelers pass through the six concourses at the Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport each day, concourses that showcase close to 250 works of art! There are both permanent and rotating exhibits, with pieces ranging from smaller framed works to monumentally scaled art integrated into the architecture. The airport even has three youth galleries in the airport, with artwork provided from school children through the Georgia Arts Educators’ Association. I am totally seeking these out the next time I pass through with my children!

Managers of the Department of Aviation’s Art Program boast of their eclectic, internationally and locally focused art collection. Throughout the airport, you will find three large floor

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mosaics, ceramic maps of world cities, murals, mixed-media artwork, glass art, bronze and stone sculptures. There is also an emphasis on musical arts, with performances ranging from straight-jazz (to coincide with Atlanta's annual jazz festival) to roving carolers in Victorian garb (to bring joy to holiday travelers).


This awesome program originated when a former mayor commissioned 14 pieces for the new main terminal, thanks to Atlanta's "Percent for the Arts" ordinance. Today? From the airport's Flickr page, "The program strives to meet the Department of Aviation's goal of

"Mustang" by Luis Jiménez — Location: approach to DIA on Peña Blvd. at Denver International Airport



becoming the world's best airport by exceeding customer expectations."

Denver

Denver International Airport is home to a world-renowned collection of public art, funded by the City and County of Denver's "one percent for art" requirement for public facilities. The airport's Public Art Program features 27 site-specific works and includes sculptures, murals and other installations. The pieces are displayed in outdoor landscapes, inside Jeppesen Terminal and on airport concourses, as well as in the train tunnels and on the train itself. In addition to the permanent art collection, DIA curates temporary exhibitions, collaborating with museums, cultural institutions and arts organizations to present the highest-quality two- and three-dimensional work. 

"Dual Meridian" by David Griggs —
Location: A Gates, Center Atrium at Denver International Airport



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