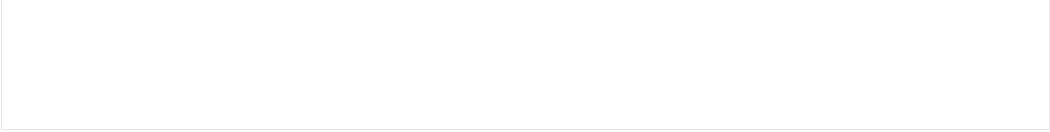




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Arts & Entertainment

The Must-See Art Shows Opening In Dallas This February

The DMA continues a Matthew Wong retrospective, and February brings six exhibitions that are off the beaten track.

By Eve Hill-Agnus | February 9, 2023 | 10:02 am



“Chorus” by Gabrille Goliath is up through March 19 at the Dallas Contemporary.
Kevin Todora



February may seem like a doldrum month: after the buzz of the holidays, a lull. But exhibitions in museums and galleries are making this February hum with energy. See several major shows before they close and venture off the beaten path.

Dallas Museum of Art

Matthew Wong: The Realm of Appearances

If there is one museum show you must see before it vanishes, it is this unprecedented exhibition. DMA curator Vivian Li approached the first retrospective of the self-taught painter Matthew Wong with thoughtful sensitivity. He was born in Toronto. He studied photography at City University in Hong Kong, and eventually returned to Edmonton, Canada, where he died by suicide in 2019 at the age of 35.

Reclusive, Wong interacted mainly over social media, in swaths of comments where he shared his thoughts and images of his works in progress. It revealed an appetite for all artistic media. His influences ranged from Van Gogh to Andrei Tarkovsky to Spaghetti Western films. His style can seem reminiscent of Gustav Klimt and Cezanne, David Hockney and Matisse all at once. And I was not at all surprised to learn that the young poet Ocean Vuong was an inspiration.

Wong's work can seem naive—almost childlike—but that belies the brilliance of color and patterning in paintings that range from flat, matte acrylic to an almost meringue-like buildup of oil paint. There is something simple but intuitive about the way a streak of bright turquoise river snakes its way back to the horizon of mountains and somber sky in *Once Upon a Time in the West*. In other works, trees with pink and purple leaves dot Seussical landscapes of exuberance and pattern. But darkness also lurks.

Emotional landscapes—similar to Edvard Munch's—betray lights in dimness and lonely moments. Local artist Trey Burns created a short video that is a tapestry of interview clips with friends and colleagues. But the artist remains elusive, too. The DMA was the only museum to collect Wong's work during his lifetime, acquiring *The West* (on view) in 2017 after it was shown in that year's Dallas Art Fair (Wong's first U.S. art fair).

And so, it feels especially significant that the retrospective is held here. (The catalogue that accompanies the exhibition is also thorough and brilliant.) The works will return to numerous private collections and the Matthew Wong Foundation. But in this potent show, the viewer is drawn into Wong's landscapes.

On view until Feb. 19, 2023. See hours and information [here](#).

Dallas Contemporary

Chorus

You enter a darkened room. South African artist Gabrielle Goliath's installation is a somber witnessing. Two videos are projected on screens, which join a wall of names (an homage) and midnight-hued pillows on which to watch and listen in silence.



Witnessing is what the

Matthew Wong has a retrospective at the Dallas Museum of

Menu

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witnessing is attenuated, wrapped in dignity. In one of the videos, members of the University of Capetown choir hum a 23-minute, single-note lament. It is for Uyinene Mrwetyana, the 19-year-old student from the University of Capetown, whose rape and murder in 2019 ignited outrage and invited urgent questions about how to address gender-based violence against women, children, and the LGBTQ+ community.

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A hum is resonance, as universal as breathing. In a written statement, Goliath mentions last year's school shooting in Uvalde that makes her current

work relevant and site-specific. The whole body responds to the simple, profound work.

This exhibit is on view until March 19, 2023. See hours and information [here](#).

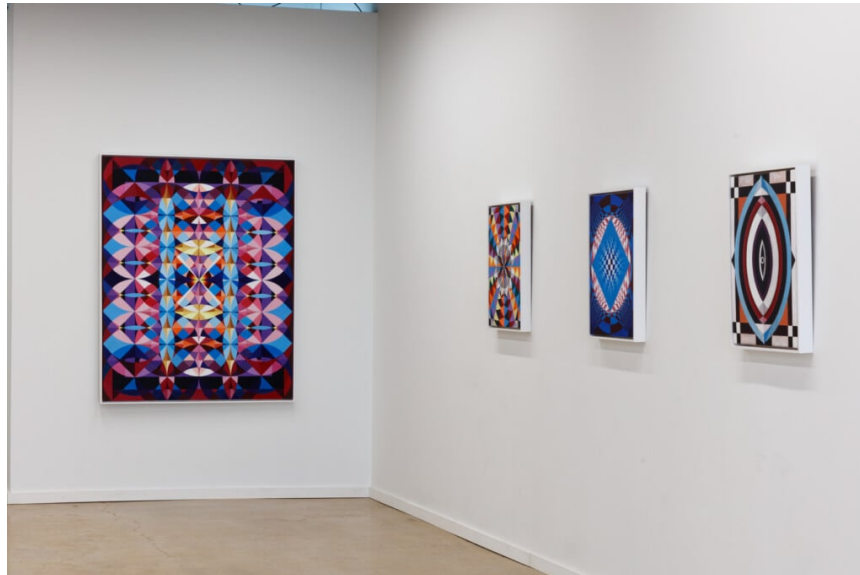
Nasher Sculpture Center

Mark diSuvero: Steel Like Paper

To see a Mark di Suvero is to see that play can be writ large in sculpture. You have to imagine, as the exhibition title suggests, that steel can fold like paper, that a monumental sculpture dominating an urban space can have the grace of a paper airplane. There is one di Suvero in the Nasher garden, a massive cluster of steel I-beams that center on a circle (the 11-ton *Eviva Amora*); it looks like a giant's game of jacks.

This exhibition delves into smaller works. Works on paper reveal the playfulness of his mind and the freedom of his hand. Di Suvero's work defies gravity. Having broken his back in a construction accident at the age of 27, di Suvero famously considered the crane his paintbrush, creating over a six-decade career. The sense of scale is both centering and soaring.

On view until Aug. 27, 2023. See hours and information [here](#).



Installation shots of Huy Nguyen's first solo exhibition.
Kevin Todora

Also see:

The MAC

Actual Scenes/Genuine Characters

The Wheeler brothers—Bryan and Jeff, both born in the Panhandle—have mined the full lexicon of cliched Texan images creating a pastiche of Americana pop imagery. Full of repetition and superimposition (and winks to art historical movements), the works are sly, irreverent, and trenchant,

like a raised eyebrow at our local myths. It's also a chance to view a space in the Cedars that's not on everyone's beaten path.

On view until Feb. 11, 2023. See hours and information [here](#).

Cluley Project

Cross-Eyed in the Crosshairs

Adding to off-the-beaten-path spots, this satellite location of Erin Cluley Gallery is a 1,200-square-foot space on Sylvan Avenue, near the Belmont Hotel, that allows the gallery to focus on nurturing regional talent. Currently, Dallas artist Huy Nguyen's first solo exhibition bristles with complex geometries that shimmer with color. Nguyen is interested in "break[ing] down the language of symbols that we encounter daily," and what each painting offers is a meditation that can lead in many directions.

On view until Feb. 4, 2023. See hours and information [here](#).

PRP Agency

Life Support

In Fabrication Alley in West Dallas, a tiny house holds the artist-run gallery showcasing experimental exhibitions. At times they are cerebral, at times political, other times bawdy. Dallas artist Kristen Cochran has filled the space with a series of photographs and two installations. You'll find photographs of sandbagged statues in war-torn Ukraine with Cochran's own larger-than-life fingers breaking the plane — alerting us of her effort to protect what she saw on her screen. The works speak to the tragedy and folly of war. They are also intimate.

"Early on in the war, when our access point to the reality was [our screens], it coincided with a round of acupuncture treatments in Frisco," Cochran says. "I would go to a cafe after my appointments to regroup. In the process, I started seeing these images. They were so arresting. They're strangely beautiful and so urgent and immediate—the sense of threat and community involvement. Symbolically, I've been interested in care and the body for a long time [...] the padded and protected." Thus emerged these haunting, touching images. The gallery also includes a collection of cast shoes and hand-crafted neon. It's not to be missed.

On Saturday, Feb. 4 at 1:30pm, Cochran will join curator and scholar Lilia Kudelia to discuss the work and practical ways to offer support to Ukraine.

On view until Feb. 5, 2023. See hours and information [here](#).

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