

About Richmond Arts and Culture

Richmond, VA is home to a robust cultural community with a number of visual and performing arts organizations, historic museums and sites serving the metro area's population of 1.2 million. In this vibrant creative community, Virginia Commonwealth University's new Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA) will be a destination for contemporary arts in the region when it opens in October 2017.

Visual Arts

Richmond is home to the state's largest art museum, **The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts**, which reopened in 2010 after undergoing the largest expansion in its 75-year history and boasts a collection spanning more than 5,000 years. The city's vibrant Downtown Arts District is home to many galleries, boutiques, and cultural spaces, and the city's **First Fridays Art Walk** features a wide selection—including **1708 Gallery**, one of the oldest artist-run galleries in the country. The Uptown Arts District on West Main Street has developed a diverse community of galleries, including **Reynolds Gallery** and **Page Bond Gallery**, and the **Visual Arts Center of Richmond**, which offers classes, workshops, and exhibitions across a variety of disciplines. The formerly industrial Manchester Arts District is home to the artist-run **Artspace and Plant Zero Art Center**, with 60 working studios. Art museums and exhibition spaces at local universities include VCUarts' **The Anderson**, an exhibition and program space for students; **Virginia Union University Museum Art Galleries**; and the **University of Richmond's** art museums. Additional museum offerings include the **Science Museum of Virginia** and the **Branch Museum of Architecture and Design**.

Performing Arts

Richmond is home to the state's first professional ballet company, **Richmond Ballet**, which has an emphasis on classical and contemporary repertoire; and **Richmond Symphony**, celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2017, which presents traditional and contemporary symphonic productions. The Norfolk-based **Virginia Opera** presents eight performances throughout the year in Richmond. The recently renovated historic **Richmond Centerstage**, the city's premier performing arts center, houses four venues and is home to nine resident companies. **The National**, a former vaudeville theater, now offers popular music concerts. **Virginia Repertory Theatre**, central Virginia's flagship professional company, presents the classics, contemporary works, and world premieres. The **Firehouse Theatre Project**, housed in a former fire station, presents contemporary American works with an emphasis on new play development. The **Byrd Theatre**, a movie palace built in 1928 and a state and national historic landmark, has operated almost continuously since that time. The University of Richmond's **Modlin Center for the Arts** presents student performances as well as visual and performing artists from around the globe.

Historic Sites and Museums

Richmond's history reflects a national history, prominently featured in key events of the Revolutionary War, Civil War, and Civil Rights movement. As the former capital of the Confederacy, the **American Civil War Museum** combines three historic sites, including the White House of the Confederacy, to present the political, social, and military stories of the era. The **Virginia Historical Society** is both a history museum and a research library, housing collections of objects, manuscripts, and photographs. **The Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia**, recently moved to a renovated armory in historic Jackson Ward, is dedicated to preserving and presenting the many facets of Black history.

Architecture

The city's rich architectural landscape represents both the old and the new. Highlights include the iconic **Virginia State Capitol** (1788), designed by Thomas Jefferson; the textured row houses of historic **Church Hill** and the **Fan District**; and distinctive mid-20th century expressions by such masters as Richard Neutra, Philip Johnson, SITE, Minoru Yamasaki, and **Skidmore, Owings & Merrill**. Richmond's Monument Avenue and Jackson Ward neighborhood are national historic landmarks. **Monument Avenue** is recognized for the architecturally significant houses, churches, and buildings, as well as monuments to significant Richmonders throughout history. The residential district **Jackson Ward** is celebrated for its significance in African American history. By the 20th century, Jackson Ward became the largest African American community in Richmond, and was a nationally recognized center of cultural and economic activity.