

PILLOW TALK: LUXURIOUS PLACES TO REST YOUR HEAD

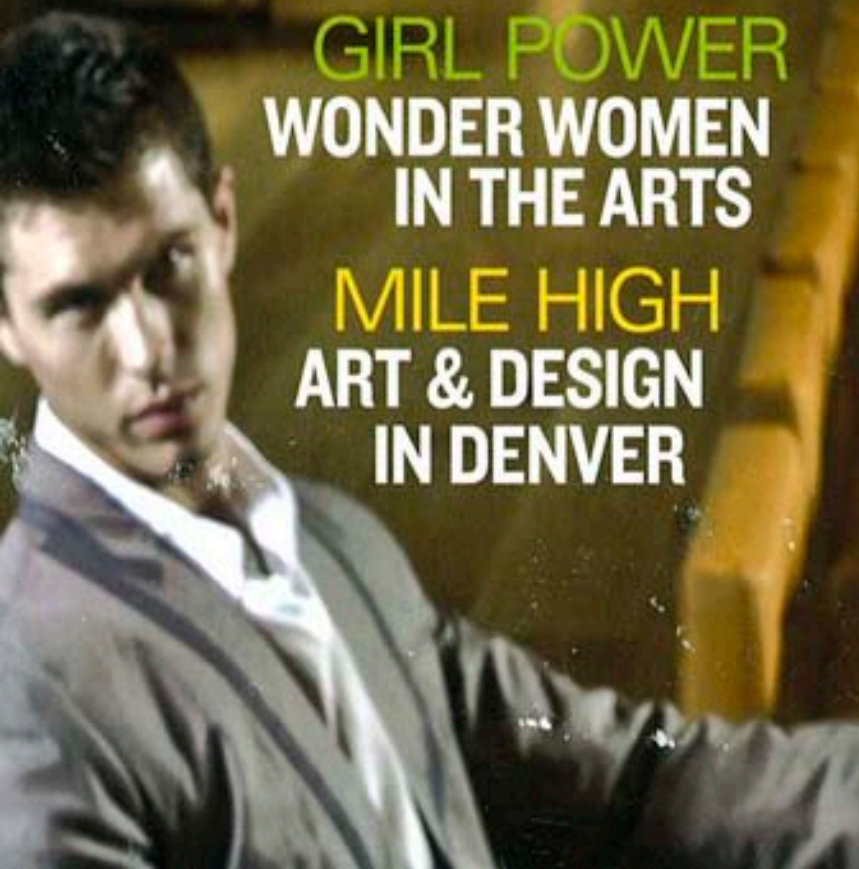
Desert Living

MODERN LUXURY FOR THE DESERT

CAGED
COUTURE
HIGH FASHION
FOR THE BIRDS

GIRL POWER
WONDER WOMEN
IN THE ARTS

MILE HIGH
ART & DESIGN
IN DENVER



Good Design Does Denver

AN ART & ARCHITECTURE TOUR THROUGH THE MILE-HIGH CITY

Denver Art Museum

A LETTER FROM MODERN ART TO THE PEOPLE OF THE PHOENIX ART SCENE.

Dear Phoenix,
Go to Denver.
Thanks,
Modern Art

EVERY TIME I RETURN FROM A TRIP TO Europe, I get depressed. Not because I miss walking or cool bars or better clothes or meeting people from other parts of the world, but because the moment I see the woman in the bright red straw cowboy hat, bedazzled jeans, and Bebe tee back at Sky Harbor, I realize I probably should have stayed over there. In much the same way on a recent trip to Denver, I witnessed an art scene that seemed cohesive, part of the daily fabric, and operating to its fullest potential. And it kind of made me want to stay.

To understand the art scene in Denver, as an outsider, is to *not* understand it. There's the ArtDistrict Santa Fe, which is comparable to our 3rd Street and Roosevelt area but centered on a six-

block-long stretch of road (Santa Fe Street) – it's as if our art scene were headquartered in that great stock of buildings just east of 16th Street on McDowell. There's RiNo (River North), a scattered but divinely inspiring section of town where artists have rehabbed old warehouses and industrial spaces – think Bentley Projects, times 20. There's the Daniel Libeskind-designed Denver Art Museum—it's the anchor, and kind of comparable to our Phoenix Art Museum but more dashing. Then there's the most recent influx of energy, the Museum of Contemporary Art—think SMOCA but less curvy, bigger, and not designed by Will Bruder.

Denver's MCA was designed by David Adjaye, whose London-based firm, Adjaye Associates, is hoping for Gold LEED-certification. Over 50 percent of the building's exterior is a double-skin façade, composed of a tinted glass curtain wall and an interior of Monopan[®], a translucent, honeycomb-like composite recycled building material. Besides creating a cavity plenum that reduces

cooling loads and serves as a release chamber for exhaust air from the interior, the double skin allows the building to glow from within at night, illuminating the corner of 15th and Delgany like a beacon of modern design. There technically isn't a front door to the simple rectangular structure; it's entered through a kind of outdoor hallway, where visitors check in at an open-air front desk. Inside, slivers of natural light pour across expansive white walls and pull visitors in various directions, eventually culminating at the rooftop organic café where one of the best views of downtown Denver can be had.

The undisputed grande dame of the art scene in Denver, though, is the Denver Art Museum, with its photogenic new Hamilton wing unveiled in late 2006 and designed by Daniel Libeskind. You've likely seen this building published in a thousand places, but the structure (and the collection within) is truly deserving of its nearly two years in the spotlight. From the exterior, the building is an abstraction of Rocky Mountain peaks and geometric rock crystals. Inside, an exciting type of

vertigo awaits. There's no doubt the curators have been challenged to find a simple straight wall on which to hang work, but meandering through the museum feels like exploring a snow-capped cavern — there's something different around every corner. Besides being *in* architecture that reflects the wild exterior, you'll enjoy finding spots where angled walls work for art and spots where they, well, don't.

For a more insider's art experience, head to Santa Fe Street, where one by one, dealers, entrepreneurs, and artists are rehabbing spaces to form a centralized collection of locally owned galleries, restaurants, and shops. The area holds First Friday openings similar to other cities and a Third Friday night aimed at collectors. There's an entire day's worth of gallery jumping here, so start at one of our favorites, Habitat, and let fate lead you from there.

Minutes from ArtDistrict Santa Fe is one of Denver's greatest art secrets — The Dikeou Collection, curated by Devon Dikeou. This shy but extremely connected arts advocate is the publisher of Zing Magazine, an oversized and somewhat underground publication that invites artists to submit work for 16-page spreads. Dikeou's collection is located in over a dozen rooms on the fifth floor of a non-descript office building. You'll think you're in the wrong place until the moment you encounter any one of the cutting-edge contemporary works. They may include giant, blow-up bunnies, doll-filled planes made of cardboard, a room filled almost to the ceiling with wood, or life-size mannequins crawling for their lives.

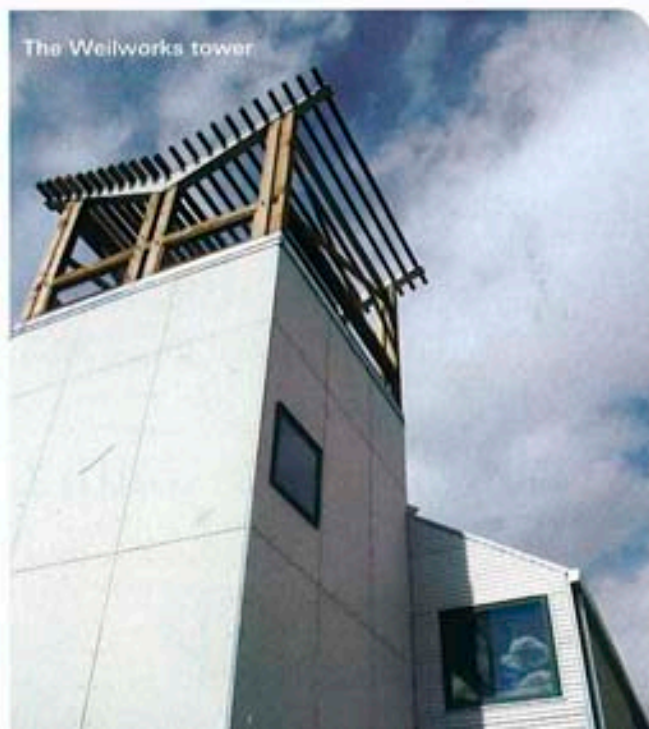
The urban renewal continues in River North (RiNo), where people like painter Tracy Weil have targeted a healthy stock of warehouses and industrial buildings. Weil has reworked an existing building into a modern space where she can live, work, exhibit, and entertain all at once. She shows by appointment only, and if you're lucky, she'll take you up the tower for a spectacular view of somewhat distant downtown. It's from this tower that you may be able to understand this scene — you know, the one that's so hard to understand. As scattered and all over the map as it may be, that's what makes it so fun to explore. There's good art everywhere you turn.



Denver Art Museum



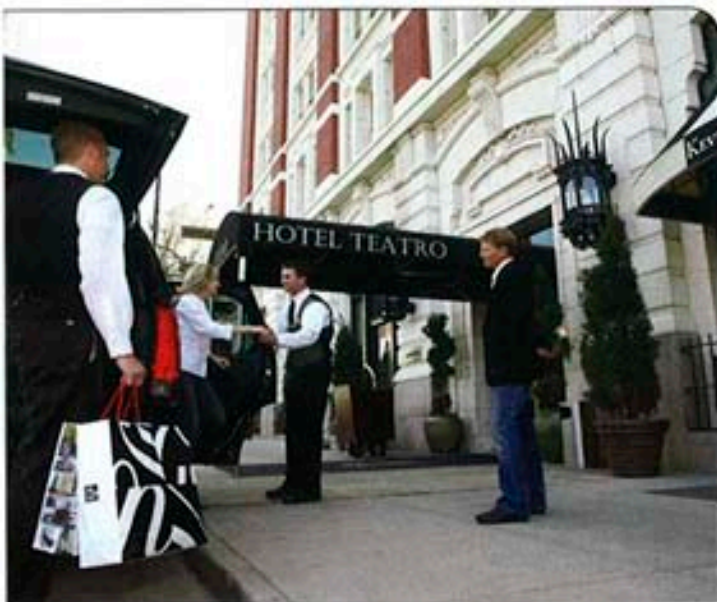
Paul Ramirez Jonas' work at Dikeou Collection



The Wellworks tower



MEANWHILE, IN COLORADO SPRINGS



HOTEL TEATRO
1100 14th St. Denver, CO
303.228.1100, hotelteatro.com

WHERE TO STAY

Modern architects seem to have a sixth sense for cool hotels, so when Hotel Teatro came highly recommended from one of Phoenix's best, the room was booked faster than you can say "steel and glass." This fully remodeled historic tower is located steps from the Denver Performing Arts Complex and is now outfitted with glass-enclosed walk-in showers, soaking tubs, silk bed coverings, and an overall theme that plays on the hotel's name ("teatro" means "theater" in Italian) in a soft and sophisticated way. The 110-room hot spot attracts business travelers who grab coffee and toast at the on-property Kevin Taylor restaurant and art-seeking travelers who want a touch of luxury during their stay, such as in-room holistic and spa treatments.



Cornerstone

LEAVE YOUR PRECONCEPTIONS OF small mountain towns somewhere along I-25 as you take the hour drive south from Denver to Colorado Springs. What makes this day trip so worthwhile? The Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, with its new 48,000-square-foot, clean-lined and open addition, can now show off its dazzlingly large collection that focuses on 19th to 21st-century American and Hispanic/Native American art. The new museum was designed by David Owen Tryba, a local architect who learned to ride his bike as a child in the original 1936-built FAC parking lot. This museum's collection will have you repeatedly asking, "Am I really in Colorado Springs?!" On display now through July 5: "Life as a Legend: Marilyn Monroe." The show takes a look at the iconic figure through the eyes of more than 65 artists.

And as you read this, the Edith

Kinney Gaylord Cornerstone Arts Center (825 N. Cascade Ave.), designed by Antoine Predock, should be undergoing its finishing touches in time for fall occupation by students of new and performing arts, including dance, music, and theater. The structure itself is an anomaly to the neighboring historic Colorado College campus, with its sharp angles and play of concrete, steel, and glass. Even within, teaching will take an interdisciplinary approach, affording students of the arts a more avant-garde curriculum that defies the more common collegiate structure (stay tuned to DL for a follow-up story after the fall classes). Cornerstone will open this summer for a Music Festival before students flood the gates, so if you want to see the structure in action before fall, visit www.coloradocollege.edu and search for the Summer Festival of the Arts for a performance schedule.

Fine Arts Center (FAC)



ROCKMOUNT RANCH WEAR
1626 Wazee St.
800.7.ROCKMO
rockmount.com



WHERE TO SHOP

It's difficult for us to recommend a Western-wear shop, because those are fashion shackles *Desert Living* is not-so-quietly trying to break free from. But if you're going to buy a plaid, double-pocketed Western shirt with funky buttons, then look no further than Rockmount — the folks who supplied the wardrobe for the boys of *Brokeback Mountain*, Eric Clapton, Bob Dylan, and hundreds of other public figures (see the list online). Don't forget to say "hi" to the shop's owner, 106-year-old Jack Weil, who still works there daily.

5 WAYS THE DENVER MCA IS ACHIEVING A GOLD LEED CERTIFICATION

- ▶ Mitigate the heat island effect with a rooftop garden.
- ▶ Electricity purchased from 100 percent wind power.
- ▶ No refrigerants used in the evaporative cooling system.
 - ▶ Radiant floor heating.
- ▶ Admission discounts to visitors who use public transportation for their visit.



Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA)

ART STARTS HERE

DENVER ART MUSEUM
100 W. 14th Ave. Pkwy
720.865.5000
denverartmuseum.org

DIKEOU COLLECTION
1615 California St., Ste. 515
(5th floor, corner of
16th & California streets)
Hours 12-4 Fridays & by appt.
303.893.1414
dikeoucollection.org

HABITAT GALLERY & STUDIO
828 Santa Fe Dr.
303.534.9740; habitatgallery.com,
artsdistrictonsantafe.com
John Hickenlooper may be the elected mayor of Denver, but Jack Pappalardo is certainly the central nervous system for street level growth. As the president of ArtDistrict Santa

Fe, and owner of Habitat, Pappalardo is one of the city's greatest champions of urban renewal. Stop by and say Hi.

MUSEO DE LAS AMERICAS
861 Santa Fe Dr.
303.571.4401; museo.org

One of the most thoughtful and expertly curated spaces on Santa Fe.

MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART
1485 Delgany St.
303.298.7554; mcadenver.org

TRANSLATIONS GALLERY
773 Santa Fe Dr.
303.629.0713
translationsgallery.com
On display: Green: A Recycled Art Show, July 18–September 13. Showing recycled art in all mediums during Democratic Convention in Denver, August 25-28.

WEILWORKS
3611 Chestnut Place
by appt. only
303.308.9345; weilworks.com

FINE ARTS CENTER
30 W. Dale St.
Colorado Springs, CO
719.634.5581
csfineartscenter.org

*For a more detailed list of what we experienced on our recent trip, sign up for *Desert Living's* e-blast, *SCOOP*, before June 30 to receive our full itinerary in early July.*

