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Press Kit and Images

The Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts Announces 2027 Exhibition Season

Highlights Include Iconic Photography, a Special Museum Partnership, and the Next Chapter of a Legacy Exhibition

LITTLE ROCK, Ark., Oct. 21, 2026 — [The Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts \(AMFA\)](#) today announced its 2027 exhibition season, which includes *Cecil Beaton's Fashionable World*, a celebration of the photographer's glamorous portraits and fashion work, opening in February. The museum will present *Pete Souza: Two Presidents, One Photographer*, in partnership with the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History, featuring portraits of Presidents Reagan and Obama. The *Delta Triennial*, AMFA's legacy exhibition, returns in June.

The season begins in November with *The Way Things Go*, a film by Swiss conceptual artists Peter Fischli and David Weiss that follows a chain reaction of everyday objects. The season also includes *Poetic Ecology: Inez Whitfield and Michael Sherrill*, which pairs Whitfield's Arkansas wildflower watercolors with Sherrill's botanical sculpture, and *Josef Albers: Interaction of Color*, which examines how color shifts depending on its surroundings. *The Things We Carry* reveals how art can transform the heaviest burdens into shared stories of resilience and connection.

Admission to AMFA is always free. For more information about AMFA or upcoming exhibitions, visit arkmfa.org.

See the full schedule of exhibitions below:

**[Cecil Beaton's Fashionable World](#)
Harriet and Warren Stephens Family Gallery
February 5 - May 30, 2027**



Cecil Beaton (1904-1980), *Elizabeth Taylor*, 1955, gelatin silver print. Cecil Beaton Studio Archive, ©Condé Nast.

Cecil Beaton's Fashionable World is the first exhibition dedicated solely to Beaton's groundbreaking contributions to fashion and portrait photography. The exhibition is organized by the National Portrait Gallery in London and curated by photography historian and contributing editor to *Vogue*, Robin Muir.

Known as "The King of Vogue," Cecil Beaton (1904-1980) was an extraordinary force in 20th-century England and America. Renowned as a fashion illustrator, Oscar-winning costume designer, social caricaturist and writer, Beaton imaginatively elevated fashion and portrait photography into an exuberant art form. The exhibition showcases Beaton's images of Jazz Age New York and England's "Bright Young Things," a group of eccentric socialites from the 1920s and '30s, his wartime photography, the high fashion brilliance of the '50s, and the glittering, Oscar-winning success of *My Fair Lady*. Via London, Paris, New York and Hollywood, his era-defining photographs captured beauty, glamour, and star power in the interwar and early postwar eras.

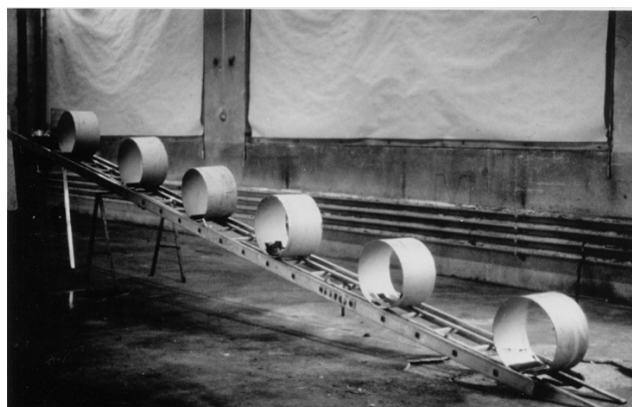
The exhibition includes photographs, magazine covers, fashion illustration, and portraits of some of the 20th century's most iconic figures, including Marilyn Monroe, Audrey Hepburn, Elizabeth Taylor and Marlon Brando; Queen Elizabeth II and Princess Margaret; as well as Truman Capote, Jean Cocteau, and Salvador Dalí.

AMFA is one of only two U.S. venues for the exhibition, and its presentation will exclusively feature period fashions by the designers and department stores featured in Beaton's photographs, including Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel, Irene, Christian Dior, Hattie Carnegie, and Bonwit Teller.

Cecil Beaton's Fashionable World is generously presented by Mary Olive and John Stephens.

This exhibition is organized by the National Portrait Gallery, London, and presented by the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts.

The Way Things Go: Peter Fischli and David Weiss
Fine Arts Club New Media Gallery
November 25, 2026 - May 16, 2027



Peter Fischli (1952-) and David Weiss (1946-2012), *The Way Things Go* (still), 1987. Photo courtesy of Icarus Films.

Collaborating for over thirty years, Swiss artists Peter Fischli (Zurich, Switzerland, 1952-) and David Weiss (Zurich, Switzerland, 1946-2012) blurred the line between art and everyday life by elevating humble objects through photography, film, and sculpture.

Dubbed by *The New York Times* as the "merry pranksters of contemporary art," their sense of deadpan humor is on full display in *The Way Things Go*, 1987. For this work, Fischli and Weiss constructed an elaborate and precariously balanced kinetic sculpture that they filmed in an inventive domino effect of destruction. Fischli and Weiss' tires, trash bags, ladders, and other household objects move on their own, rolling, bumping, and ricocheting off each other to cause chemical reactions. Their carefully constructed

world stirs our sense of wonder and anticipation, while playing with ideas of order, disorder, building, and collapse.

The film will run continuously in AMFA's Fine Arts Club New Media Gallery, inviting guests to stop in anytime and stay as long as they wish.

Screening courtesy of Icarus Films. Run time 31 minutes.
This exhibition is organized by the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts.

Pete Souza: Two Presidents, One Photographer

**On view at the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History
(Located in MacArthur Park next to AMFA)
February 15 - March 28, 2027**



Pete Souza (1954-), *Five-year-old Jacob Philadelphia touches the head of President Obama, after Jacob told the President that his friends said his haircut was just like the President's*, 2009, photograph. © Pete Souza

Pete Souza is best known for the memorable images he captured as Chief Official White House Photographer for President Barack Obama and as an Official White House Photographer for President Ronald Reagan. Featuring some of Souza's favorite photographs of Obama and Reagan, *Pete Souza: Two Presidents, One Photographer* is an AMFA exhibition in partnership with and on view at the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History.

Iconic photographs of Obama and Reagan will offer a glimpse at candid moments, revealing each man's human side during his time in office.

Connecting the museums and MacArthur Park, this exhibition will open on Presidents Day to honor both leaders' deep respect for the presidential office and sincere regard for the people they met.

The exhibition brings together two presidential administrations, two museums, and one photographer's remarkable eye.

This exhibition is organized by the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts, in partnership with the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History, City of Little Rock. White House photographs by Pete Souza. This exhibition was organized by art2art Circulating Exhibitions.

Delta Triennial

**Harriet and Warren Stephens Family Gallery
June 25 - September 26, 2027**



Molly Kaderka, *Ferrous Form*, 2023, hand-marbled paper collaged and laminated to the wall.
The 2024 *Delta Triennial* Grand Prize-winning artwork. Photography by Jason Masters.

Bringing together the freshest contemporary voices in the Mid-South region, the *Delta Triennial* highlights how artists explore ideas, innovate materials, and create work that speaks to the here and now. The *Delta Triennial* continues AMFA's more than 60-year commitment to amplifying art in our region. The show introduces emerging artists while celebrating those more established in their careers from Arkansas and its surrounding states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas. With the *Delta Triennial*, AMFA creates a global dialogue between regional, national, and international artists, whose work is also on view in the adjacent collection galleries. This artistic conversation showcases the nuances of the Mid-South region while underscoring global commonalities about art and life.

Serving as juror of the *Delta Triennial* is world-renowned curator and art historian, Valerie Cassel Oliver. With expertise in contemporary art, Cassel Oliver is uniquely positioned to understand the art of the region, seeing it through fresh eyes. Cassel Oliver grew up in Houston, Texas, attended the University of Texas at Austin, and earned a graduate degree at Howard University in Washington, D.C. From 2000-2017, she was the senior curator at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. In her current role, Cassel Oliver is the Sydney and Frances Lewis Family Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

Artists juried into the exhibition are eligible for two major monetary prizes. One work is chosen by the juror, and the other is a People's Choice Award. Museumgoers vote for their favorite work in the exhibition, creating a one-of-a-kind experience.

Complementing the artists juried into the *Delta Triennial* by Cassel Oliver, AMFA curators selected one artist from each of the seven states represented. These artists use materials that align with the strengths of the museum's collection, craft, works on paper, and contemporary installation. The selected artists are Teresa Cole (Louisiana), Danielle Hatch (Arkansas), Paul McCreery (Texas), Althea Murphy Price (Tennessee), Holly Wilson (Oklahoma), Cayce Zavaglia (Missouri), and F.C. Zuke (Mississippi). Their work will be in dialogue with the juried artists, providing a full picture of the region's creativity and talent today. Overall, the *Delta Triennial* is the region's premier juried exhibition, featuring a diverse group of contemporary artists working today.

Supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, Friday, Eldredge & Clark, LLP and the Andre Simon Memorial Trust Fund in memory of everyone who has died of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

This exhibition is organized by the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts.

Poetic Ecology: Inez Whitfield and Michael Sherrill

Berta and John Baird Gallery

March 27 - August 29, 2027



Inez Whitfield (1867-1951), *Honeysuckle, yellow: Lonicera flava (April)*, circa 1925, watercolor on paper, Gift of the Arkansas Federation of Garden Clubs. Photography by Jason Masters.

Inez Harrington Whitfield (1867-1951) is beloved for her watercolor portraits of native Arkansas wildflowers. She brought her expertise as a poet and educator from New York to Hot Springs at the turn of the century. Initially seeking treatment for her rheumatoid arthritis in the therapeutic waters, she remained and left her mark on the city, becoming one of its most notable artists. In the 1920s and 1930s, she also helped establish the Little Theater, university and business organizations for women, the Hot Springs Garden Club, and she edited the local visitor's bulletin.

Whitfield was also a prolific writer and citizen scientist. She published short stories and articles in newspapers, bulletins, and magazines that celebrated the region's national park and natural beauty. An avid birder and outdoorswoman, she devoted her artistic practice to documenting native wildflowers one by one. On black or white paper, she created faithful portraits of actual specimens — ideally with roots attached so they could be replanted — and recorded bloom seasons, as well as both Latin and common names. She attributed distinct characteristics to each plant, describing some as “strongly aggressive, bold or daring, others modest and retiring, or stubborn, hard-working creators of beauty for the world ...” Her understanding of ecology extended beyond plants alone. She worked with the Wildlife Preservation Society and advocated for conservation of native plants, concerns that remain urgent today.

Collaboratively curated, the exhibition is a fitting tribute to Whitfield's devotion to Arkansas's landscape and native wildflowers. Dr. Catherine Walworth, Jackye and Curtis Finch, Jr., Curator of Drawings, brings fresh archival research aimed at rediscovering the artist's own poetic voice. Lifting this love of nature out of the frame and into three dimensions, Stefanie Kirkland, AMFA's Windgate Foundation Curator of Contemporary Craft introduces the botanical sculptures of North Carolina craft artist Michael Sherrill.

Sherrill uses porcelain, glass, and metal to forge works inspired by the native flora surrounding his Appalachian studio. As a self-taught artist, he initially drew from North Carolina folk pottery and Appalachian craft traditions. With a career spanning more than 40 years, he has perfected his techniques and, in the 1990s, began creating a series of delicate plant forms. Highlighting the beauty in both new growth and decay, these botanical works are familiar yet wondrous.

AMFA has cared for nearly 400 of Whitfield's watercolor paintings since 1945 and recently conserved over 60 works. In spring 2027, the museum will celebrate Whitfield in its Berta and John Baird Gallery, the first such exhibition in nearly 50 years.

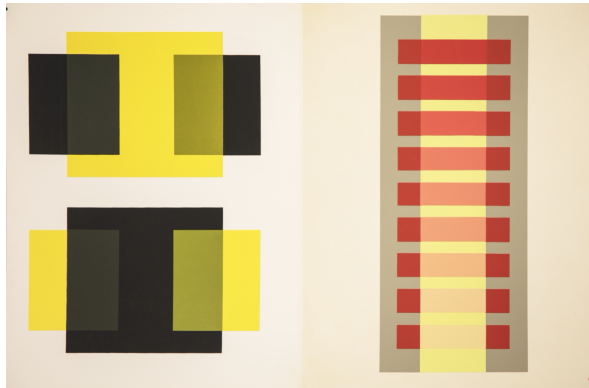
Stefanie Kirkland says, "Both artists share a reverence for nature. Sherrill's botanical sculptures will complement dozens of Whitfield's colorful paintings, creating a respite, a place to stop and appreciate the natural world around us."

This exhibition is organized by the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts.

Josef Albers: Interaction of Color

Berta and John Baird Gallery

September 11, 2027 - February 20, 2028



Josef Albers (1888 - 1976), *Interaction of Color, XI-1*, 1963, screenprint on paper, Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts Foundation Collection.

Color is magic; it can throb with energy or have a calming effect. Blue vibrates when next to yellow but is soothing to the eye when placed against green. Constantly shifting and changing depending on their pairing, these interactions affect how we decipher and feel color. Innovatively playing with these ideas, Josef Albers (1888-1976) transformed both how we think about color and 20th-century modern art.

In his seminal text and portfolio, *Interaction of Color*, 1963, Albers created images in collaboration with his students to teach and illustrate his theories. Highlighting different optical effects, he ingeniously combined geometric forms with various bands or blocks of hues in different values. This masterful manipulation of those elements proves how they recede, project, or shift in tone in relation to each other. With the vibrant and playful original silkscreens from *Interaction of Color* on view, Albers shows the inherently fluid nature of color. Through placement, afterimages, and various spatial illusions, he demonstrates how our perception of color is both subjective and relative.

These innovative ideas made Albers one of most influential figures in 20th-century art. His teaching and stunning works of art put him at the forefront of art movements such as Minimalism and Op Art and continue to reverberate today.

This exhibition is organized by the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts.

The Things We Carry

Harriet and Warren Stephens Family Gallery

October 22, 2027 - February 13, 2028



Nick Cave (1959 -), *Tondo*, 2018, mixed media including wire, bugle beads, sequined fabric, and wood. © Nick Cave. Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York.

Art is a mirror and a portal. It reflects our inner world, evokes emotions, and creates pathways to shared human experiences. The artists featured in *The Things We Carry* create work that conveys personal stories of transformation as they navigate life's most unimaginable obstacles of war, illness, incarceration, and migration. Merging beauty and depth, their work evokes healing and empathy, proving that we are not alone in the burdens we each carry.

The stories held within each work of art are personal. In *Dragon Tail*, 2025, Tuấn Andrew Nguyễn (Vietnam, 1976-) considered the aftermaths of the Vietnam War from which he fled as a child. Believing that objects and places hold stories, Nguyễn used pieces of unexploded bombs embedded in the Vietnamese landscape to construct a stunning kinetic mobile that emits healing sound frequencies when hit with a mallet. Jordan Nassar (New York, 1985-) questions how Americans carry familial histories and preserve their cultural identities when part of a diaspora. Finding connections to his heritage, his large-scale textile *facing the sunset*, 2026, portrays a utopic vision of his ancestral homeland. Another example is formerly incarcerated artist Jesse Krimes (Pennsylvania, 1982-) who crafts quilts that use clothing fragments and other materials gathered from current and former inmates. He aims to restore dignity and humanity to those serving prison sentences.

The Things We Carry is an invitation to reflect upon how we construct our identities in reaction to complex or difficult circumstances. The exhibition brings together some of the greatest contemporary artists working today alongside emerging voices. With new pieces created for the exhibition or chosen in concert with the artists, each work of art speaks of courage, hope, healing, and transformation. Encountering them helps us make sense of our world while conveying what it means to be human.

This exhibition is organized by the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts.

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About the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts

Founded in 1937, the Arkansas Museum of Fine Arts is the largest cultural institution of its kind in the state, offering a unique blend of visual and performing arts experiences. AMFA is committed to featuring diverse media and artistic perspectives within its permanent collection as well as through rotating temporary exhibitions. AMFA's international collection spans eight centuries, with strengths in works on paper and contemporary craft, and includes notable holdings by artists from Arkansas, the South, and across the United States and Europe.

With a vibrant mix of ideas, cultures, people, and places, AMFA extends this commitment to diversity through the innovative Windgate Art School, a dynamic children's theatre and performing arts program, and community-focused educational programs for all ages. Located in Little Rock's oldest urban green space, MacArthur Park, AMFA's landmark building and grounds are designed by Studio Gang and SCAPE, in collaboration with Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects.