

Kansas And Missouri Artists Selected For 'State Of The Art' Exhibition At Crystal Bridges

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In 2013, [Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art](http://crystalbridges.org/) in Bentonville, Ark., embarked on a project to discover “the most compelling American art being created today.”

Over a period of about 10 months, museum president Don Bacigalupi and assistant curator Chad Allgood crisscrossed the country. They traveled more than 100,000 miles — by plane and car — and stopped in the homes and studios of nearly 1,000 artists.

The result of this epic journey: 200 artworks and 102 artists selected for the exhibition, [State of the Art: Discovering American Art Now](http://crystalbridges.org/exhibitions/stateofheart/), which opens in September. Bacigalupi calls it “a glimpse into the state of art in our nation at this moment.”

There’s sculpture, ceramics, painting, photography, video, site-specific installation, and more. The artists range in age from early 20s to late 80s, from every region of the country, including 27 from the Midwest.

Five artists in the exhibition are based in Missouri, including [Miki Baird](http://www.mikibaird.com/) and [Calder Kamin](http://calderkamin.wordpress.com/) (Kansas City), [Jamie Adams](http://jamieadamsart.com/) and [Tim Liddy](http://www.timliddyworks.com/) (St. Louis), and [Julie Blackmon](http://www.julieblackmon.com/) (Springfield). There are also two artists from Kansas: [A. Mary Kay](http://www.bethanylb.edu/academics/areas-of-study/art-department/contacts/name/mary-kay/) (Lindsborg) and [Randy Regier](http://www.randyregier.com/) (Wichita).

“We looked for engagement with issues and narratives that underpin our everyday lives, as well as an ability to manipulate material in manifest or beautiful and accessible ways,” Allgood told the Los Angeles Times. “We talked a lot about appeal. Contemporary art is vital and important and can reach a wide audience; it’s not hermetic, not closed, not purposefully obfuscating.”

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, designed by architect Moshe Safdie, opened in 2011. It was founded by Walmart heiress and arts patron Alice Walton. The museum’s permanent collection spans five centuries, from Colonial times to the present.