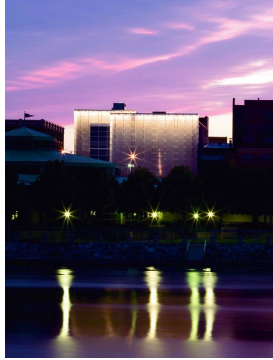


# Spring is the perfect time to visit area museums

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(Photo: Christopher Barrett, Hedrich Blessing, Chicago)

While big cities like Milwaukee are a magnet for art lovers with their well-known museums, there are smaller museums in southeastern Wisconsin with some fine collections. Their small size makes it easy to digest all the fine art within their walls.

All three of these museums are housed in beautiful, contemporary buildings that creating comfortable, airy spaces for viewing works of art. And what better way to spend a cold, gloomy day than viewing the creative work of talented artists?

## The Museum of Wisconsin Art



Tom Bamberger, Windmills, Inkjet pigment print mounted on aluminum, 2006, 24½ x 107¼ in (Photo: Tom Bamberger)

I visited the museum a couple of years ago shortly after it opened a 32,000-square-foot facility just off West Bend's charming main street.

The museum is housed in a handsome, triangular white building on the banks of the Milwaukee River. The interior has a light, spacious feel for its five permanent collection galleries and three contemporary exhibition spaces. The large storage area is visible through glass enclosures.

"We are dedicated to historical and Wisconsin art, starting from the 1800s to the present," says Laurie Winters, the museum's executive director. "Our contemporary program is very strong."



HGA Architects and Engineers designed the Museum of Wisconsin Art in West Bend. It overlooks the Milwaukee River. (Photo: Darris Lee Harris)

The museum houses some 5,000 works of art, representing more than 350 artists.

For the first time in the museum's history, all three changing exhibition spaces will be dedicated to displaying the work of a single artist, Milwaukee photographer Tom Bamberger.

"It's very exciting," says Winters, adding that the exhibit celebrates Bamberger's 40-year career, which spans from analog to digital photography, and his gift of more than 400 photographs to the museum. Highlights of the exhibit, called "Tom Bamberger: Hyperphotographic," are a 36-foot long panoramic photograph featuring an Oak Creek landscape, as well as a 22-foot photograph and ten 10-foot photos.

The Bamberger exhibit runs March 25-May 21.

Other March exhibits are "Charles Thwaites: An American Journey" and "Shane McAdams: The Accidental Landscape" through March 12.

## Racine Art Museum

Like West Bend's museum, the Racine Art Museum got a new home in 2003. The building an award-winning work of art itself.

"The building looks contemporary, but it is actually two historic buildings," says Jessica Zalewski, the museum's marketing and publications manager. She adds that the gangster John Dillinger robbed the bank that once occupied one of the old buildings in 1933.

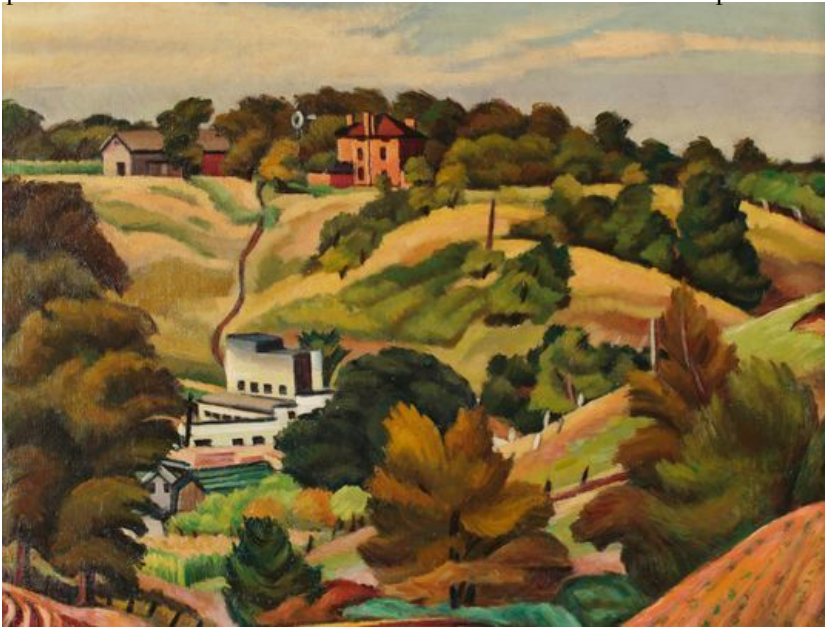
Today, open space define the 46,000-square-foot interior, and the exterior is illuminated at night adding to the downtown skyline. Zalewski indicated that the openness gives the museum "a sort of Zen feeling."

The RAM is noted for its large collection of craft art, holding more than 9,000 objects representing nationally and internationally recognized artists.

"Our focus is on contemporary crafts," says Zalewski. "You'll see many materials untraditional for fine art."

Artful crafts including ceramics, fibers, glass, metals, polymer and wood can be viewed, as well as paintings and sculptures. The museum rotates its permanent collection three times a year, offering patrons fresh art with each visit.

Current exhibitions at RAM include "Wustum Generations," featuring artists who have been important to Wustum Museum of Fine Art's 75-year history. Zalewski says that for this exhibit, the museum will have a traditional "salon style" look with more artwork filling the walls than usual.



Sylvester Jerry's "Main Road, Kendall" (1933, oil) is on view at the Museum of Wisconsin Art as part of the "Wustum Generations" exhibition. (Photo: Jon Bolton)

Another exhibit, "Teapots from RAM's Collection" through April 30, features more than 100 teapots, according to Zalewski. "They all look ceramic, but they might be made from other materials," she said.

Other exhibits are "Gifts from Big Donors" and "WPA Art from RAM's Collection" through June 4; and "Jessica Calderwood: Fictitious Flora" through July 23.

RAM's Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts, two miles from the downtown campus, offers nationally recognized exhibitions in themed fine art and craft media. Each show emphasizes the ideas shared by participating artists. Wustum Museum currently features "Watercolor Wisconsin 2016" through April 22; "Featured Artist: John Kearney" through May 12; and "Cultivating Creativity: Celebrating 75 Years of Wustum" through Nov. 25.

## Madison Museum of Contemporary Art

The museum's collection of some 5,000 objects, based on a major gift from Rudolph and Louise Langer in 1968, includes works by significant American artists of the 20th and 21st centuries, as well as Wisconsin-based artists.

In 2006, the century-old museum moved into its permanent home, a 51,500-square-foot facility in the Overture Center for the Arts. The facility includes a 7,100-square-foot rooftop sculpture garden.

Current exhibitions include "Reconfigured Reality: Contemporary Photography from the Permanent Collection" through Nov. 12 and "Do Ho Suh" through May 14.

## If you go:

### The Museum of Wisconsin Art, West Bend

[Wisconsinart.org](http://Wisconsinart.org)

262-334-9638

10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Thursday

\$12 admission includes a yearly membership

### Racine Art Museum

441 Main St., Racine

Spring is the perfect time to visit area museums  
262-638-8300

<http://www.lakecountrynow.com/story/life/30west/out-and-about/de...>

Ramart.org

10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday, 12-5 p.m. Sunday, open until 9 p.m. the first Friday of the month

\$5 adults/\$3 seniors and students/free for children under 12

**Madison Museum of Contemporary Art**

227 State St., Madison

608-257-0158

Mmoca.org

Open 12-5 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday; 12-8 p.m. Friday; 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Saturday; 12-5 p.m. Sunday

Free admission

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