



ABOUT MESA ARTS CENTER

Mesa Arts Center's mission is to create meaningful arts experiences in Mesa for everyone.



Photo Credit: Delia Johnson



Destination for Arts and Culture, Education and Entertainment

Mesa Arts Center is the largest arts center in Arizona and the only center offering comprehensive professional performing arts, visual arts and arts education programming on one state-of-the-art campus.

Mesa Arts Center presents innovative projects, partners with groundbreaking artists and collaborates with community to embrace challenges, opportunities and enrich public life.

Mesa Arts Center by the Numbers

On an annual basis, Mesa Arts Center welcomes over 425,000 visits.

- Nearly 700 performing and visual arts education classes offered for youth and adults.
- Nearly 30,000 students and over 115 schools reached through outreach programs.
- Over 5,000 lifelong learners reached through engagement programs.
- Over 60 teaching artists work on behalf of Mesa Arts Center's community and educational programs.
- Over 1,000 performances and events.
- Fifteen exhibitions offered in the free Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum.
- Two free community festivals and numerous community events.
- Size: Three-building complex, 212,775 s.f. on seven acres.
- Groundbreaking: May 20, 2002, opened spring 2005 with Michael Crawford.

Types of Programming

- **Performing Live:** presents world-class professional touring performances in a wide range of genres.
- Subscription Series: **Broadway** series, **National Geographic Live** speaker series and **Classical Music Inside Out** under the artistic direction of GRAMMY® Award-winning cellist Zuill Bailey.
- **Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum:** a free visual arts exhibition space committed to the presentation, interpretation, collection, documentation and preservation of contemporary visual arts. Dedicated to presenting exceptional regional, national and international exhibitions, Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum provides support and advancement to artists worldwide through solo, group and juried exhibitions while promoting educational opportunities within our community.
- **Art Studios:** over 700 performing and visual arts education classes for youth and adults, including **Arts in Service**, a free program providing creative pathways for veterans and service members to use studio arts experiences in reaching their personal goals, and **We Serve Too!** classes for military families and partners.
- **Engagement:** Mesa Arts Center's Engagement Programs provide high-quality arts experiences for people of all ages and backgrounds. From 8th–12th grade students improving literacy skills through hip hop, poetry and drama in **LIT Ink** to **MABEL**, our mobile popup arts center on wheels to older adults connecting by dancing flamenco in **Opportunities for Ages 55+**, these programs are driven by the belief that the arts are critical to a healthy and active community.
- **Festivals and Events:** two major festivals offered free to the community include **Día de los Muertos Festival** and **ALT Fest**; **Out to Lunch**, a free lunchtime concert series; and other special events.
- **Mesa Arts Center Podcast:** Listen to authentic and lively conversations that dive deep into the artistic process and origin stories of local and national creatives. New episodes drop in audio and video formats on Spotify and YouTube.

Home to Local Performing Arts Companies

Founding Resident Companies: Ballet Etudes, East Valley Children's Theatre, Mesa Encore Theatre, Metropolitan Youth Symphony, Southwest Shakespeare Company and Symphony of the Southwest.

Resident Companies: Salt River Brass



Photo Credit: Delia Johnson



Photo Credit: Sergio Albarra



Accessibility

Mesa Arts Center is committed to making its performances and facilities accessible to all patrons, including accommodation for visitors who are blind, deaf, have mobility impairments or sensory-processing disorders. Additionally, as a Certified Autism Center™, Mesa Arts Center offers designated sensory spaces, provides visitors sensory bags upon request, utilizes social stories, offers virtual tours and participates in the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program – providing discreet support to guests with disabilities that may not be apparent.

The Campus

- **Three buildings** located on **seven acres**; 212,775 s.f.
- **Theaters Complex:** four theaters – 1,570-seat Tom and Janet Ikeda Theater, 550-seat Virginia G. Piper Repertory Theater, 200-seat Nesbitt/Elliott Playhouse, 99-seat Anita Cox Farnsworth Studio Theater – box office, continuous lobby, concession areas, 17 dressing rooms, back of house and technical support spaces.
- **Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum:** 5,500 s.f. exhibition space in five galleries – Wilson and Ruby Dobson Main Gallery (2,400 s.f.), South Gallery (1,400 s.f.), Dr. Ruth Tan Lim Project Room (500 s.f.), SRP Permanent Collection Gallery (500 s.f.), North Gallery (700 s.f.) – meeting space, lecture hall, lobby atrium for artwork, sculpture courtyard, back of house and collection storage spaces (5,500 s.f.).
- **Art Studios:** 14 visual and performing art studios and classrooms – Esma and Eddie Basha Sr. Ceramic Studio, Warren Langfitt Painting Studio, East Valley Tribune Print Studio, Wayne and Cecil Pomeroy Family Glass Courtyard, Barbara Stimmel Jewelry Terrace, James M. Passey Sr. Welding/Sculpture Studio, Photography, Multipurpose Room, Joanie Flatt Family Drama Terrace, Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre Acting Studio, Jack and Jeanne Wright Family Dance Studio and Co.Lab.
- **Shadow Walk:** outdoor gardens, sunken courtyards, private gathering places and informal performance areas.

Design Features

A unique and inviting oasis during the day, and a transparent and luminous beacon at night, with an image both classic and forward thinking.

- **Design Concept:** was inspired by and reflects the unique character of the Sonoran Desert – a rich desert, mountain and canyon environment.
- **Architectural Features:** jagged angles, canted walls, sloping roofs, glass walls, regional colors and materials.
- **Outdoor Features:** a terraced, desert oasis with a graceful arc of trees, exotic gardens, an arroyo and other water features, abundant shade from giant canopies and glass pergolas that cast colorful shadows on the walkways.

Public Art:

- **“Interdependent Nature” by Shepard Fairey:** a two-panel mural on the west side of campus, featuring imagery that explores the connection between nature and humanity. It is Fairey’s first mural in Arizona.
- **“Fragmented Landscape” by Ned Kahn:** lobby shade screens that shimmer like water and reflect swirling desert sand dunes.
- **“Color Walk” by Beth Galston:** colored glass panels inspired by sunset-colored storm clouds on a bridged walkway.
- **“Light Storm” by Catherine Widgery:** silver lobby floor medallions that dissolve with changing light.
- **“Memento” by Rebecca Ross:** a unique, inviting and shaded bus shelter.
- **“Mesa Musical Shadows” by Daily tous les jours:** designed to be in direct relationship with the sun, this installation is an interactive pavement that plays music with light.
- **“Desert Rose (Nuevas Generaciones)” by EL MAC:** a two-story mural depicting a young woman holding a single long-stem red rose in the courtyard of Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum.

World-Class Facility Design Team

- BOORA Architects of Portland and DWL Architects & Planners of Phoenix, architects
- Martha Schwartz, Inc, landscape architect
- Auerbach Pollock Friedlander, theater consultant
- Auerbach Glasow, lighting designer
- McKay, Conant Brook, acoustical consultant
- Kitchell CEM, construction management
- Layton Construction of Arizona, general contractor

Recent and Noteworthy Awards

- Phoenix New Times Best of Phoenix 2025, 2024, 2022, 2021 and 2020 Best Performing Arts Center
- The National League of Cities 2022 Cultural Diversity Awards winner for Día de los Muertos Festival
- Phoenix New Times Best of Phoenix 2022 Best Día de los Muertos Festival
- Phoenix New Times Best of Phoenix 2022 Best Art Classes
- Pollstar Top 200 Venues Worldwide 2017-2019
- International Association Venue Managers 2012 Venue Excellence Award

