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TRAVEL FOR THE CONNOISSEUR

ART *Express*

KANSAS CITY KANSAS CITY

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The anticipation in **Kansas City** is palpable. There is no question that this long-awaited building has that mysterious “wow” factor that will make it an essential destination. Don’t expect an iconic structure like the Guggenheim Bilbao, however. “It’s not an object,” architect **Steven Holl** says. “The only way to see it is to move through it.” Set to make a celebratory public debut on June 9, 2007, the **Block Building** is an extension of Kansas City’s venerable **Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art**. From New York to London, critics who have enjoyed privileged previews are already weighing in with the prediction that this will be the sixty-year-old *enfant terrible* architect’s masterpiece. This writer has yet to see an “easy” Holl building. Perhaps they are always provocative because, as he observes, “I choose work that is hard to pull off...but if there is no risk involved, it’s not challenging.” Risk is clearly the route that Holl, Nelson-Atkins director and CEO **Marc F. Wilson**, and the museum’s trustees chose. Because that risk involved Kansas City’s crown jewel — one of America’s finest art museums — the process has been precedent-shattering every stop of the way. Now the applause! Holl works with form and light to create experiential spaces and these are said to be glorious. Five levels of expansive, light-filled galleries, plus a new main lobby, **Museum Store**, **Museum Café**, and the **Spencer Art Reference Library** will increase the museum’s space by more than seventy percent and much of the 165,000-square-foot expansion is underground, lighted by five “crystalline-shaped boxes,” which the architect calls lenses, sprinkled alongside the original Beaux-Arts building like so many glowing diamonds on the grand hillside lawn.

The great majority of community museums in this country were built during the first third of the 20th century to resemble classic, symmetrical, precisely refined temples for art, and the Nelson-Atkins’ 1933 building is no exception. As beautiful as it is, it is a model, typical of many other museums, which architects have found almost impossible to extend with complimentary contemporary wings. Steven Holl’s solution to the problem is both extreme and extraordinary and signals the transformation of the institution as a whole, integrating architecture, landscape and art in an unprecedented museum experience. The new entry plaza is now focused on a stunning reflecting pool centered by artist **Walter de Maria**’s minimalist sculpture installation. In addition, a Holl-designed court will feature, for the first time, the museum’s major collection of works by **Isamu Noguchi** (second only to that of the Noguchi Museum in Queens). The 73-year-old Nelson-Atkins building is being completely renovated, as well, and will house the museum’s world-renowned Asian collection, American Indian, Ancient Art, European and American decorative arts, and works on paper; while African art, photography, contemporary art, and temporary exhibitions will fill the **Bloch Building**, which will open with the magnificent works lent by donors **Marion** and **Henry Bloch**. The inaugural exhibits include

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Manet to Matisse: Impressionist Masters from the Marion and Henry Bloch Collection; *Developing Greatness: The Origins of American Photography*, selected from the museum's recently acquired **Hallmark Photographic Collection**; and *Trouble in Paradise: Japanese Contemporary Art*, exploring themes common to the work of the three leading exponents of the new trends, **Takashi Murakami, Yoshitomo Nara** and **Chiho Aoshima**. So, plan your trip now to join in the celebration, and, if it's your first, you'll be richly rewarded by the Midwest's finest hospitality.

When you reluctantly leave the Nelson Gallery (its abbreviated local name), you'll be stepping into the heart of the handsome old **Rockhill** neighborhood, developed at the turn of the 20th century by, and named after, **William Rockhill Nelson**, the founder of *The Kansas City Star*, whose mansion used to command the crest of the hill where the museum sits today. To the west, just across the street, look for the **Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art** and the adjacent **Kansas City Art Institute**. The Kemper and its collections were the gift of local banker **R. Crosby Kemper**, his wife **Beebe**, and the foundations of the Kemper family. It opened in 1994 in a distinctive contemporary building by architect **Gunnar Birkets** — noted for his designs for the **Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston**, the **Corning Museum of Glass**, and the **South Wing of the Detroit Institute of Arts**, among his museum projects. The collection includes works by **Louise Bourgeois, Christian Boltanski, Jasper Johns, Frank Stella, Jackson Pollock, Robert Rauschenberg, Robert Motherwell, Willem de Kooning, Wayne Thiebaud**, and many more. *Everyday Delights: Prints by Wayne Thiebaud* (through July 13), and *Jennifer Steinkamp*, a traveling exhibition organized by the **San Jose Museum of Art** (through May 13), are the stellar exhibits this spring. And, don't leave the Kemper without a visit to its **Café Sebastienne**, one of Kansas City's most popular restaurants. Chef **Jennifer Maloney's** American contempo cuisine and the savvy, eclectic wine list are a big draw.

Before you say goodbye to Rockhill, you must also pop outside for a visit to the prestigious Kansas City Art Institute (both Bob Rauschenberg and Don Judd attended) in the same triangle. In **Bloch Artspace**, the *2007 Annual B.F.A. Exhibition* will be on view April 21-May 19 and this is a great place for discoveries. If you go this summer, *America Starts Here: Kate Ericson and Mel Ziegler* will be on view June 15-September 29. It's the first career retrospective for these very high-profile alums (Ericson died at 39, but the exhibit was organized by **MIT List Visual Arts Center** and the **Tang Teaching Museum** in cooperation with Ziegler).

As you head back down **Oak Street**, punctuated by views of the Nelson's fabulous **Kansas City Sculpture Park**, make a quick detour to **Winstead's**, home of America's most lauded hamburger — actually steakburger — and indulge in the lunch that has been every local's occasional habit for some fifty years: a doubleburger, fries, and a frostie. The sauce is a secret, guarded with the same zeal as

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HOTELS

Intercontinental at the Plaza, 401 Ward Parkway, Kansas City, MO, Tel. 816-756-1500, 888-424-6835. Nestled in a corner of the Country Club Plaza and with a bewitching view of it — if you ask for a Plaza-view room — this Fairmont hotel is a fine headquarters for your visit. Essentially, it is a fairly large (346 rooms) high-quality, business-style hotel, with a three-star ranking. There are no five-star hotels in Kansas City, and we find the difference between the Intercontinental and the three, four-star hotels largely a matter of personal preference and location. *ARTexpress* likes this location.

Raphael Hotel, 325 Ward Parkway, Kansas City, MO, Tel. 816-756-3800. A restored 1927 apartment building opened as a hotel in 1975, this has been THE place to stay in Kansas City for more than thirty years. The 88 suites and 35 rooms are traditional, and service has always been a plus. A classic boutique hotel, the Raphael is one of the four-star properties. Our only hesitation is that friends who have stayed here are beginning to say an up-date is due.

Westin Crown Center, 1 Pershing Road, Kansas City, MO, Tel. 816-474-4400. Located in the bustling Hallmark Crown Center, surrounded by shops, restaurants, theaters...and more, the Westin Crown Center is in midtown, about halfway between downtown and the Plaza. An excellent four-star hotel, it's simply a matter here of choosing proximity to K.C.'s signature restaurant, The American, the activities of Crown Center and the Union Station over our personal choice of the Plaza location.

Hotel Phillips, 106 West 12th Street, Kansas City, MO, Tel. 816-221-7000. The 217-room Phillips is a downtown landmark just two blocks from the Convention Center and a great place to be if you plan to spend your days in The Crossroads Arts District. A member of Preferred Hotels and Resorts, it's also a AAA Four-Diamond award winner.

Hilton President Hotel Kansas City, 1329 Baltimore, Kansas City, MO, Tel. 816-221-9490. Too new to be ranked, this historic renovation project is generating good vibes. It's also in the heart of downtown, across the street from the new H&R Bloch World Headquarters and a part of the K.C. entertainment district, with all kinds of pedestrian-friendly amenities a few steps away (213 new rooms that, in their own retro way, remember the 40s).

RESTAURANTS

The American Restaurant, 25th and Grand Blvd., Crown Center, Kansas City, MO, Tel. 816-545-8000. Perhaps the first classic, iconic American restaurant to become a celebrated place to dine, this Warren Plattner-designed, AIA award-winning dining room remains at the top of the Kansas City list, with innovative chef Celina Tio on hand, and breathtaking views.

40 Sardines, 11942 Roe, Overland Park, Kansas, Tel. 913-451-1040. Chefs Debbie Gold and Michael Smith first met at Chicago's famed Charlie Trotter's, and after turns at L'Albion in the South of France and The American Restaurant, they decided to go it on their own, having received the James Beard Award for Best Chef(s)

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in the Midwest in 1999. 40 Sardines opened in June 2002 and remains, without a doubt, Kansas City's best bistro and both a local and national destination.

Lidia's Kansas City, 101 West 22nd Street, Kansas City, MO (in the Crossroads Arts District), Tel. 816-842-1960. Yes, this is the same Lidia Bastianich of Boston and New York. Lidia's occupies a former railroad house just north of the historic Union Station, in a space designed by the ubiquitous New York architect David Rockwell. The feel is Italian farmhouse and the cuisine was voted Kansas City's "Best Italian" by the Zagat folks. Lidia's son Joseph and Kansas Citian David Wagner are on board here and it's always lively with Saturday and Sunday "Market Brunch" especially popular.

Le Fou Frog, 400 East 5th Street, Kansas City, MO (near the City Market, downtown), Tel. 816-474-6060. Whoever thought you'd find a French bistro complete with outdoor café tables in the alley right in the midst of old downtown? Chef Mano Rafael is from Marseilles, but ended up in K.C. via New York and a local bride. They say the test is in the *soupe a l'oignon gratinee!*

KANSAS CITY BARBECUE

If you're carrying Calvin Trillin's notes in hand and headed for the original thing, you must go to **Arthur Bryant's** (1727 Brooklyn, Tel. 816-231-1123) and **Gates and Sons Bar-B-Q** (1221 Brooklyn, Tel. 816-483-3880). Part of the old Kansas City Royals' neighborhood hangouts, these two largely cafeteria-style or carry-out service bastions of barbecue nirvana are differentiated primarily by their sauces — Bryant's sweeter, Gates tangier. Trillin hotly insists Bryant's is the best restaurant in the world; Gates has equally passionate followers. Should you want your barbecue with just a bit more ambience and dining comfort, try:

Fiorella's Jack Stack Barbecue, 22nd and Wyandotte, Kansas City, MO, Tel. 816-472-7427. In the freight house behind the Union Station, this third-generation K.C. barbecue, rated "best in the country" by Zagat, is served in a fabulous old freight-depot architectural setting.

NOW: KANSAS CITY STEAK

— for "prime" lovers, the best there is. Don't call your favorite cut a New York steak here; it's a Kansas City strip! You should be able to get a top-quality steak at any good Kansas City restaurant that caters to prime beef connoisseurs, but the grungy Kansas City stockyards area harbors the granddaddy of all steakhouses, **The Golden Ox** (1600 Genessee Street, Tel. 816-842-2866), which still has a lot of clout in this category. My personal, life-long favorite in the surf and turf world is what we all believe to be the oldest continuously operating restaurant in Kansas City:

Savoy Grill, 9th and Central, Kansas City, MO, Tel. 816-842-3890. The elegant Savoy Hotel opened in 1888 and, with the construction of a new west wing in 1903, the gorgeous Savoy Grill, with its imported marble and tile, brass fixtures, Art Nouveau stained-glass skylight, and huge carved oak bar, opened to the rave reviews of such noted patrons as Teddy Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, W.C. Fields, Sarah Bernhardt, and John D. Rockefeller. Booth #4, "the presidents' booth," welcomed Harding, Truman, Ford and Reagan — along

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the Coke formula, so don't bother to ask.

Now you have arrived at the edge of the rightfully legendary **Country Club Plaza**, created by local developer **J.C. Nichols** in 1922, and based on the distinctive local squares he saw in the European towns he visited traveling from Spain to Italy. The architecture tips its hat to Seville and the complex as a whole has long been known as America's first shopping center or outdoor shopping mall. During the Christmas season, planes crisscrossing the country still dip low to see the sparkling lights outlining each and every building — a sight visible for miles.

Here, on this eastern edge of the Plaza, at 46th and Main, is the 1940-42 **Community Christian Church** by **Frank Lloyd Wright**, who commanded that, as part of his design, it would have a unique "Spire (or Steeple) of Light." The war ensued, the spire was never completed, and Wright did not always acknowledge the building. The perforated masonry roof was to have featured "searchlights piercing" the apertures, and 1941 drawings show a floodlighted sky with the "steeple of light" shining with "8,000 candlepower." In 1990, Kansas City sculptor **Dale Eldred** was commissioned to fulfill Wright's vision, and finally, on December 15, 1994 (following Eldred's untimely death in 1993), the **Steeple of Light** was dedicated just in time to celebrate the holiday lighting of the entire Plaza. Tours of the Community Christian Church are free and open to the public and the Spire continues to serve as a beacon for the city.

The Plaza has always been home to Kansas City's most elegant shops, fine restaurants, and more recently, high-rise offices and hotels. Hotels to consider, if you plan to focus your visit on the Plaza area (also adjacent to the **University of Missouri at Kansas City**), include the **Intercontinental at the Plaza**, the **Marriott Kansas City Country Club Plaza**, and the **Raphael Hotel**, a boutique hotel voted one of the World's Best Places to Stay by **Condé-Nast Traveler**.

Just to get the inevitable confusion out of the way, when natives say "Kansas City," they generally mean the metropolitan area that lies across the State Line between Missouri and Kansas and encompasses some eleven counties. The heart of Kansas City is situated just east of the picturesque bend where the Kansas (Kaw) and Missouri Rivers merge. West of downtown Kansas City, Missouri (KCMO) is **Wyandotte County**, the site of Kansas City, Kansas, while south and west of downtown, you'll find such beautiful residential districts as **Ward Parkway** in Missouri and **Mission Hills** and **Shawnee Mission** in Kansas. If you're lost, just look for a street named "State Line." You'll hear the metro city called "The City of Fountains," where the number of said fountains is exceeded only in Rome.

Another new arts destination is scheduled to be unveiled at **Johnson County (Kansas) Community College** this coming fall. The much-touted **Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art**, by Cambridge-based (Mass.) architect **Kuy Sung Woo**, situated among

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the spare rolling hills of JCCC, will showcase the museum's brilliant collection, benefited by major gifts from the **Nerman family** and from **Tony and Marti Oppenheimer**. Director **Bruce Hartman** has shepherded the museum's growth, and with works by such major figures as **Frank Stella, Magdalena Abakanowicz, Antony Gormley, Dennis Oppenheim, Leon Golub, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Uta Barth, Elizabeth Murray, Louise Bourgeois, Gregory Crewdson** and more art stars than you could possibly name, excitement is high. The new building will make it possible to both display the collection and present temporary exhibits, plus space is planned for the **Oppenheimer New Media Gallery**, classrooms, a gift shop, restaurant and auditorium. Stay tuned! This promises to be a singularly important addition to the Kansas City art scene.

And speaking of that scene, its fabulously energetic for-profit centerpiece, which for years has successfully prodded the re-development of old downtown Kansas City, is known as the **Crossroad Arts District**. It's an historic neighborhood (represented by the non-profit Crossroads Community Association) where art galleries, shops, restaurants, architects, designers, filmmakers... and more, flourish. The big deal is "First Fridays," when all the participants host the community and everyone takes to the streets in a celebration of openings, eats, and events that has become a very popular tradition. Don't miss such favorite stops as the **Byron C. Cohen Gallery for Contemporary Art**, the **Belger Arts Center**, **The Dolphin** (gallery), or, when hunger sets in, chocolates by **Christopher Elbow** (among the country's best!) following dinner at **Lidia's** (yes, **Lidia Bastianich** of Boston and New York fame). Check the schedule, too, for the annual **Crossroads Music Festival**. Here, in the home of jazz, music venues abound.

Lots of great visiting tips come from the redoubtable **Elizabeth Wilson** — orientalist, connoisseur of everything beautiful or delicious, spouse of **Marc**, and proprietress of the amazing **Asiatica**. A mélange of Asian decorative objects, artful jewelry and exquisite clothing made from rare and antique Japanese fabrics collected on her ongoing tours of Japan comprise the home-base of Asiatica at 4824 Rainbow Boulevard, Westwood, Kansas. Perhaps you've met Elizabeth at one of her cross-country trunk shows. Her list of not-to-be-missed stops includes all of the museums and galleries mentioned here, plus such favorite destinations as **The Harry S. Truman Library** (the first presidential Library and home of a splendid **Thomas Hart Benton** mural) in nearby **Independence**; the **Liberty Memorial**, long a Kansas City landmark, recently restored and designated by Congress in 2004, America's **National World War I Memorial**; the **Steamboat Arabia Museum** (400 Grand Street, Tel. 816-491-4030) a time capsule of treasures recovered from a boat headed west in 1856, which sank to the bottom of the Missouri River and stayed there untouched until 1988 when the Hawley family painstakingly excavated the boat and restored the cargo to this amazing museum where the artifacts are beautifully installed in a dramatic space underground below the City Market;

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with the above, and everyone marveled (as they still do) at the Edward Holslag mural depicting the pioneers' departure from Westport Landing (this is, after all, the head of the Santa Fe Trail). No longer in a posh neighborhood, the Savoy has survived everything from prohibition to prostitution, but it remains, without a doubt, the best-loved dining experience steeped in history. The fresh Maine lobster has been the top dish for 104 years!

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 4525 Oak Street, Kansas City, MO, Tel. 816-751-1ART, www.nelson-atkins.org. On June 9, 2007, an always splendid museum is going to unveil a visionary new expansion that, as Director Marc Wilson notes, is "perhaps the most conspicuous symbol of a new era in Kansas City." *Metropolis*, the architecture magazine, observed in March that "this is one of the most captivating contemporary museum experiences since the opening of the Tate Modern." Plan to be there for the festivities. Saturday, June 2, a Benefactors' and Patrons' event; Member Preview Day, Wednesday, June 6; Friends of Art Member Preview Days, June 7, 8 — including a Block Party on the night of the 8th — and the gala Opening Weekend for the public June 9-10. Hours: Tuesday-Thursday 10-4; Friday 10-9; Saturday 10-5; Sunday noon-5.

Kansas City Sculpture Park at the Nelson-Atkins Museum; a collaboration between the Museum, The Hall Family Foundation, and The Kansas City, Missouri, Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners. The great lawn of the Museum is a 22-acre urban oasis designed by Dan Kiley and Jaquelin Robertson to house a collection that includes works by Henry Moore, Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, Tony Cragg, Walter de Maria...and many more.

Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, 4420 Warwick Blvd., Kansas City, MO, Tel. 816-753-5784; hours: Tuesday-Thursday 10-4; Friday-Saturday 10-9; Sunday 11-5. Don't miss the Kemper's hugely popular Café Sebastienne, Kansas City's most artful restaurant, with cuisine by chef Jennifer Maloney. Restaurant hours are Tuesday-Saturday 11-2:30; Friday and Saturday 5:30-9:30; brunch Sunday 11-2:30.

Block Artspace, Kansas City Art Institute, 4415 Warwick Blvd., Kansas City, MO, Tel. 800-522-5224, www.kcai.edu/artspace/index.php.

Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Johnson County Community College, 12345 College Blvd., Overland Park, Kansas, Tel. 913-469-8500, Director Bruce Hartman, Ext. 3972. Stay tuned; this stunning new museum is set to debut in fall 2007.

Crossroads Arts District, centered at approximately 20th and Main in downtown Kansas City, MO. The Crossroads Community Association, www.crossroadscommunityassociation.org.

SELECTED ADDRESSES:

Byron C. Cohen Gallery, 2020 Baltimore, Tel. 816-421-5665.

Belger Arts Center, 2100 Walnut, Tel. 816-474-3250.

Christopher Elbow Chocolates, 320 Southwest Blvd., Tel. 816-842-1300.

The Dolphin, 1901 Baltimore, Tel. 816-842-4415.
Knoll, 1903 Wyandotte, Tel. 816-329-5000.

Grand Arts, 1819 Grand, Tel. 816-421-6887
And... many, many more exciting art and design spaces

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— with snacks along the way. Be sure to go to “First Fridays.” Friday openings bring a mob scene because this is everyone’s favorite art night out.

SPECIAL STOPS

Liberty Memorial/The National World War One Museum, 100 West 26th Street, Kansas City, MO, Tel. 816-784-1918; hours: Tuesday-Sunday 10-5. The beautiful Art Deco monument, a National Historic Landmark, is now home to the National World War One Museum (opened December 2, 2006). Take a tour of the Liberty Memorial and visit the museum; this is the only national World War I Memorial in the United States.

Harry S. Truman Presidential Museum and Library, 500 West U.S. Highway 24, Independence, MO, Tel. 816-268-8200, 800-833-1225; www.trumanlibrary.org. The first Presidential Library, located in Truman’s hometown of Independence, a Kansas City suburb. The building was dedicated in 1957 and additions were completed in 1968 and 1980, providing some 100,000 square feet. Art addicts go especially to see the monumental mural, *Independence and the Opening of the West*, by renowned Missouri artist Thomas Hart Benton.

Community Christian Church, 4601 Main Street, Kansas City, MO, Tel. 816-561-6531. Tours of the Frank Lloyd Wright structure are available to the public free of charge. Groups larger than 5 are asked to call for a guided tour; hours: 9-4:30 Monday-Friday (office).

Thomas Hart Benton Home and Studio State Historic Site, 3616 Belleview, Kansas City, MO, Tel. 816-931-5722. Born in 1889 in Neosho, Missouri, Benton moved to Kansas City in 1935. His home and studio remain virtually untouched since his death in 1975 and his Victorian house and carriage-house studio are open to the public. Benton was one of the most noted painters of the American scene and works can be seen here as well as at the Nelson-Atkins Museum, where major paintings are on display.

SHOPPING

Halls Plaza, 211 Nichols Road, Kansas City, MO (Country Club Plaza), Tel. 816-274-3222. A Kansas City institution (also at Crown Center), Halls reigns supreme, whether it’s wedding silver, diamonds and pearls, or French and Italian haute couture, plus any other exquisite luxuries you can imagine.

Asiatica, 4824 Rainbow Blvd., Westwood, Kansas, Tel. 913-831-0831. Founded by Elizabeth Wilson, and Fifi White (who recently retired), Asiatica is a veritable museum of rare, antique Japanese textiles reincarnated by the resident geniuses as stunning jackets, vests, coats, pants...most anything you’d love to wear. Don’t miss the household objects and jewelry either. If food is your thing, check out “Lizzie’s Table” at www.asiaticakc.com, where she posts all of her latest restaurant experiences.

AND IN THE FUTURE...

Keep your eyes open for the now-under-construction Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts by renowned architect Moshe Safdie — due in 2009. It will house the great triumvirate of the Kansas City Symphony, Ballet and Opera! Mark your calendar.

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and the charming **Toys and Miniatures Museum**, housed in a 1906 mansion owned by the **University of Missouri-Kansas City** (5235 Oak Street, tel. 816-333-2055) and founded by **Hallmark Cards** founder **Joyce C. Hall**’s daughter **Barbara Marshall** and her childhood friend **Mary Harris Francis** — a delightful respite for those of us not-quite-grown-up visitors.

When we last caught up with Elizabeth, she was pining for dinner at **40 Sardines** — or was it Lidia? Many of Kansas City’s best restaurants are clustered around **Crown Center** (developed by Hallmark Cards) and the sumptuous, old 1914 **Union Station** — one of America’s last fully restored Beaux-Arts railway palaces, glowing from its 1999 polishing — filled today with shops, restaurants, exhibition spaces, a planetarium, Science City, and the Theater District. Oh yes, you can still catch the Amtrak here.

It would be a mistake to think the pleasures of Kansas City are limited to the downtown renaissance, a cluster of marvelous museums, and shopping the Plaza. Exploring its many-faceted neighborhoods is half the pleasure. While this odyssey began in the elegant old Rockhill area, we haven’t yet touched upon other special favorites: **Roanoke**, **Westport**, **Brookside**, **Mission Hills**... and more — on both sides of State Line Road — each with a distinct personality. Roanoke, in mid-city just off the Southwest Trafficway, dates from 1887, when the Kansas City Inter-State Fair sold its property for development. The building boom began in the 1920s and the neighborhood became famous as the site of **Thomas Hart Benton**’s residence and the Usonian-style (1940-1948) **Frank Lloyd Wright Sondern-Adler House**. Today, much is hidden by dense greenery, but this central oasis retains its charm. Not far away is Westport, the original jumping-off place for covered wagons heading west along all four major trails (California, Oregon, Lewis & Clark, and Santa Fe). After the Civil War, it was eventually encircled by and became Kansas City — surviving as one of K.C.’s liveliest districts for shopping, dining, antiques, and, of course, hitting the night spots. South of the Plaza, be sure to pass through the charming village of **Brookside**, on 63rd Street between Wornall Road and Main Street. The scene of chic little shops and restaurants, it has preserved much of its 1920s ambience, and with the adjacent **Crestwood**, is very much a hip, eclectic destination. Drop by **Bloomsday Books** (301 East 55th street), a local institution, **George Terbovich Designs**, and **Bennett Schneider Stationery** — among the picturesque shops.

Finally, no Midwest quest for pleasure is complete without a leisurely drive through the loveliest neighborhood in Kansas — **Mission Hills**. Developed in the 1920s by **J.C. Nichols** to serve as the residential outpost of the **Country Club Plaza**, “old Mission Hills,” north of 63rd Street, is the realization of Nichols’ dream of rolling hills, gardens, fountains, statuary and, of course, storybook mansions. To disabuse any amateur geographer of the fact that Kansas is all tall-grass prairie, enjoy street after street of flowering lawns as far as the eye can see. Not only is everything up-to-date in... you know where, it’s also a feast for the eyes.

ART AROUND THE WORLD

News

Art enthusiasts will soon descend upon the magical city of **Venice** for the **52nd Biennale** (preview June 7-9, public viewing June 10-November 21, 2007), which offers a promising menu of exhibitions and events. *Think with the Senses, Feel with the Mind, Art in the Present Tense*, is the umbrella theme of this year's Biennale, curated by newly appointed **Yale School of Art** Dean, **Robert Storr**, the first American ever to serve in this capacity. There is quite a buzz about the American entry this year, with **Nancy Spector**, Curator of **Contemporary Art at the Guggenheim Museum in New York**, curating a show of works by **Felix Gonzalez-Torres** (1957-1996). The Cuban-born artist's minimal, ephemeral installations will be featured in the **American Pavilion**, while new work by **Tracey Emin** will fill the **British Pavilion**, in a show curated by **Andrea Rose**. Work by about 100 international artists will be displayed in the **Italian Pavilion** sited in the **Arsenale Corderie** and parts of the **Arsenale Artiglierie**, including **Francis Alys, Daniel Buren, Iran do Spiritu Santo, Yang Fudong, Yukio Fujimoto, Mario Garcia Torres, Ilya Kabakov, Martin Kippenberger, Sigmar Polke** and **Gerhard Richter**, as well as Americans **Louise Bourgeois, Jenny Holzer, Sol LeWitt, Elizabeth Murray, Bruce Nauman, Susan Rothenberg**, and **Robert Ryman**.

The Biennale itself will be enhanced by the offerings of other well-known art venues in the city. In the **Piazza San Marco, Museo Correr** presents *Sargent's Venice*, an exquisite collection of oil paintings and watercolors by **John Singer Sargent**, documenting the artist's forty-year involvement with the city. Accompanying the exhibit, a beautifully illustrated catalogue (Yale University Press) features essays devoted to Sargent and other well-known artists who were drawn to Venice. At the **Peggy Guggenheim Collection**, a show featuring the work of **Matthew Barney** and **Joseph Beuys**, titled *All in the Present Must be Transformed*, looks at the commonalities in the artists' work across generation and geography.

For a new view on your visit to Venice, we have a few insider tips from native Venetian **Francesca Bortolotto Possati**, CEO of **Bauer Hotels**. Possati loves the idea of taking a sail around Venice, not in a gondola or vaporetto, but aboard the **Eolo**, a restored bragazzo, or fishing vessel. This idyllic, flat-bottom boat boasts brick-colored sails furled on tall masts and offers a glimpse of life in a bygone era when fishing the lagoon was the norm. The charming owner is Venetian **Mauro Stoppo**, who takes pride showing his passengers parts of Venice seldom visited on other boat tours. Possati also recommends making your way to the **Marciana Library**, built by **Jacopo Sansovino** during the 16th century and completed in 1553. The brilliant architect **Andrea Palladio** considered the library the world's most beautiful building. An incredible array of works by **Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese** and other Italian masters adorns the ceilings and walls of the great building, whose centerpiece is Titian's *Wisdom*, completed in 1560. A true delight for the senses that will please art and literature lovers alike!

Great Addresses

IN VENICE

Antiche Carampane, San Polo 1911, Tel. 39-41-524-0165, www.antichecarampane.com. Situated near the Rialto Bridge, this is one of the city's oldest trattorias, loved by Venetians and visitors alike. Reasonably priced, the traditional cooking will not disappoint you.

Antica Trattoria La Furatola, Calle Lunga San Barnaba 2869, Tel. 39-41/520-8594. In Venice's Dorsoduro section, this lovely restaurant is known for its delicious roasted meats and traditional Tuscan cuisine.

The Grand Canal Restaurant, Hotel Monaco, San Marco 1332, Tel. 39-41/520-0211. Known for the finest hotel food in the city; book a table overlooking the terrace for a beautiful view of Santa Maria Della Salute while you enjoy a sumptuous meal.

Molino Stucky Hilton, Guidecca 753, Tel. 39-41/522-1267, www.hilton.com. This June, the Molino Stucky Hilton will make its debut with 380 rooms in a beautifully restored neo-Gothic building. Located on the Island of Guidecca, the hotel features stunning views of the Venetian canals, best observed from their Skyline Bar.

IN CHARLESTON

Magnolias, Uptown-Down South, 185 East Bay Street, Charleston, Tel. 843-577-7771; www.magnolias-blossom-cypress.com. True southern cuisine in a casual, welcoming setting. Sister restaurants Blossom and Cypress are rumored to be excellent as well, and are just a few steps away on East Bay Street.

FIG, 232 Meeting Street, Charleston, Tel. 843-805-5900; www.eatatfig.com. We loved this chic neighborhood bistro, and think you will too! Great ambiance, nice crowd, good contemporary art — and best of all — the Food Is Good! Focusing on locally grown organic produce, Dayboat Seafood, and farm raised meat and poultry. Written up in *The New York Times*, *Bon Appétit* and *Southern Living*, it's glowing reviews all around.

SNOB, 192 East Bay Street, Charleston, Tel. 843-723-3424. SNOB, another clever acronym, stands for Slightly North of Broad, and like FIG, it features nouvelle cuisine with locally farmed fresh ingredients. Another current hot spot!

Gibbes Museum of Art, 135 Meeting Street, Charleston, Tel. 843-722-2706; www.Gibbesmuseum.org. Located in the historic district, Charleston's signature museum features a collection of 10,000 works of art, which focus on Charleston and the south, from Colonial times to the present, including a fine contemporary selection.

Two Meeting Street Inn, 2 Meeting Street, Charleston, Tel. 843-723-7322. Reputed to be

ART AROUND THE WORLD

Great Addresses...more

Charleston's oldest and most elegant inn, this lovely Queen Anne mansion will enchant you. Situated on the corner of The Battery at Meeting Street, you will marvel at the sweeping views of Charleston harbor.

The Governor's House Inn, 117 Broad Street, Charleston, Tel. 800-720-9812. Originally built in 1760 for the Governor of South Carolina, and beautifully restored in 1998, this intimate B&B is a National Historic Landmark. We loved the Southern hospitality, wonderful afternoon tea and gourmet breakfast! Great location on Broad Street just off King Street where the best shopping is to be found.

The Mills House Hotel, 115 Meeting Street, Charleston, Tel. 800-874-9600. For a larger hotel, stay at The Mills House. Lavishly decorated common areas and gardens will please you, and the location is excellent. We loved the "Best Friend Bar."

Tommy Dew's Walking History Tour, On The Market Tours, depart daily at 11:00 AM from Market Hall, Tel. 843-853-8687; www.onthemarkettours.com. An enlightening historical tour sure to intrigue you!

IN BEAUFORT

Panini's Café, 926 Bay Street, Beaufort, Tel. 843-379-0300. Great lunch spot in an historic Greek-Revival building. Ask about the history of the building's columns.

IN SAVANNAH

The Gastonian, 220 East Gaston Street, Savannah, Tel. 800-322-6603. Perfectly located in the heart of the historic district, this charming hotel has been called "the most famous of Savannah inns and justifiably so," by *The New York Times*. An elegant Regency-Italianate style delight, this four-star property offers guests unsurpassed service.

Telfair Museum of Art, Jepson Center for the Arts, 121 Barnard Street, Savannah, Tel. 912-232-1177. Make the journey just to see Moshe Safdie's architectural wonder of an addition to this revered museum.

Sapphire Grill, 110 West Congress Street, Savannah, Tel. 912-443-9962. Chef Christopher Nason has garnered glowing reviews for his fresh market cuisine and eclectic reinterpretation of Savannah's culinary heritage. Great wine bar in an inviting setting with accents of sapphire blue in abundance.

News...more

If your travels take you to **Charleston**, South Carolina, a beautiful port brimming with character and charm, plan to see the city on foot. *ARTexpress* loved the historical walking tour with **Tommy Dew**, a high energy, very knowledgeable guide. Your tour will begin on the steps of **Market Hall** on historic **Meeting Street** and wind its way through oldest sections of downtown Charleston. The tour concludes at **The Battery**, on the southern most tip of the Charleston peninsula, with a panoramic view of the harbor and **Fort Sumter**, where the first shots of the Civil War rang out. Some of the most exquisite homes in Charleston line The Battery, so make your way back along the waterfront past **White Point Gardens** to take in these lovely antebellum homes. Historic preservation has been in effect in Charleston since the 1920s, and the condition of buildings that are over 300 years old will impress you! For fantastic window shopping, head to **King's Street**, where you will be wowed by all the retail offerings. Antique shops, upscale clothing stores, and one-of-a-kind boutiques are interspersed with fine galleries and charming eateries. Peruse the 20th-century furniture at **Carlton Dailey** (208 King St.), enjoy unique clothing, accessories and objects d'art at **Christian Michi** (220 King St.), and do not miss the chic handmade handbags at **Moo Roo** (316 King St.), **Mary Norton's** flagship store. While contemporary art is not the focus in this lovely town, an appreciation of the arts is everywhere apparent. The **Gibbes Museum** offers a wonderful array of art with a Southern focus (including modern and contemporary art), plus highlights of the city's cultural interests are also displayed at the annual **Spoleto Festival** and the **Piccolo Spoleto** in May and June, when the city is transformed by dozens of operatic, theatre, dance and musical productions. And for all you foodies out there, great food is available everywhere in Charleston. We loved the fresh organic fare at **FIG**, as well as **Slightly North of Broad**, a newer restaurant that has enjoyed stellar reviews.

If your itinerary allows, head south to **Savannah**, Georgia, by way of **Beaufort**, South Carolina, for a leisurely gourmet lunch en route at **Panini Café**, in a fabulous restored Greek-Revival-style bank building with great brick-oven pizza and charming low country view. Then on to Savannah, which is becoming a cultural destination for art enthusiasts. The city is filled with restored historic buildings, many of which belong to SCAD, the **Savannah College of Art and Design**. The presence of so many art students in the area has the city buzzing. The highlight, of course, is the **Telfair Museum's** new 64,000 sq-ft. **Jepson Center for the Arts**, designed by celebrated architect **Moshe Safdie**, which opened in 2006. The building itself is a must see, with a dramatic design that also suggests monumental sculpture. Two new large galleries can accommodate major traveling exhibitions, which focus on modern and contemporary art. There is also a fantastic hands-on space for children and their families, called the **ArtZeum**, where kids interact with works from the Telfair's fabulous permanent collection.

In July: Stay tuned for Nova Scotia – Halifax and beyond.

ART EXPRESS ART EXPRESS

Calendar

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|--------------------|--|
| April 18 - 22 | Art Cologne, International Modern and Contemporary Art Fair |
| April 27 - 30 | Art Chicago |
| April 27 - 30 | ArtDC, Washington, First Annual Modern + Contemporary Art Fair |
| Through | Apr. 29 National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. <i>Jasper Johns: Allegory of Painting 1955-65</i> |
| Through | Apr. 29 Dallas Museum of Art <i>Matisse: Painter as Sculptor</i> |
| Through | May Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Venice <i>Yasumasa Morimura</i> |
| Through | May 1 Museo d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona <i>Janet Cardiff & George Bures Miller</i> |
| Through | May 6 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York <i>Lorna Simpson</i> |
| Through | May 6 MCA San Diego, Downtown <i>Morris Louis Now: American Master Revisited</i> |
| Through | May 6 Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, WA <i>Bruce Nauman</i> |
| Through | May 6 Phoenix Art Museum, Arizona <i>Rembrandt & the Golden Age of Dutch Art</i> |
| Through | May 6 Moderna Museet, Stockholm <i>Robert Rauschenberg</i> |
| Through | May 6 Caixa Forum, Madrid <i>Jean-Honoré Fragonard</i> |
| Through | May 7 Museo del Prado, Madrid <i>Chuck Close</i> |
| Through | May 7 Tate Modern, London <i>Gilbert and George: Major Exhibition</i> |
| Through | May 13 Menil Collection, Houston <i>Robert Rauschenberg</i> |
| Through | May 13 MCA San Diego, La Jolla <i>Transactions: Contemporary Latin American & Latino Art</i> |
| Through | May 13 SFMOMA, San Francisco <i>Brice Marden</i> |
| Through | May 13 Minneapolis Institute of Art <i>Kara Walker</i> |
| Through | May 13 Museo del Prado, Madrid <i>Tintoretto</i> |
| Through | May 13 Musée d'Orsay, Paris <i>Vincent Van Gogh: The Artist's Bedroom</i> |
| Through | May 13 Ca' Pesaro - Galleria Internazionale D'Arte Moderna, Venice <i>Not Vital</i> |
| Through | May 14 Centre Pompidou, Paris <i>Annette Messager</i> |
| Through | May 14 MOMA, New York <i>Jeff Wall</i> |
| Through | May 20 Royal Academy of Arts, London <i>Unknown Monet: Pastels and Drawings</i> |
| Through | May 20 Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek <i>Cindy Sherman</i> |
| Through | May 20 Museo del Prado, Madrid <i>The Spanish Portrait in the Prado Museum</i> |
| Through | May 20 Guggenheim, Venice <i>Richard Pousette-Dart</i> |
| Through | May 20 Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid <i>Portraiture in the Age of Picasso</i> |
| Through | May 27 MCA, Chicago <i>Rudolf Stingel: Painting</i> |
| Through | May 28 K20, Düsseldorf <i>Picasso: Painting Against Time</i> |
| Through | June 3 Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona <i>Claes Oldenburg & Coosje van Bruggen</i> |
| Through | June 3 LACMA, Los Angeles <i>The Modern West: American Landscape 1890-1950</i> |
| Through | June 3 J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles <i>Art, Anti-Art, Non-Art</i> |
| Through | June 3 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York <i>Barcelona & Modernity: Gaudí to Dalí</i> |
| Through | June 6 Guggenheim Museum, New York <i>The Hugo Boss Prize 2006</i> |
| Through | June 7 Whitney Museum of American Art, New York <i>Gordon Matta-Clark: You are the Measure</i> |
| Through | June 10 Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach <i>Chris Burden</i> |
| Through | June 10 De Young, San Francisco <i>Vivienne Westwood: 36 Years in Fashion</i> |
| Through | June 10 Tate Britain, London <i>Jake & Dinos Chapman: When Humans Walked the Earth</i> |
| Through | June 11 MOMA, New York <i>Comic Abstraction: Image-Breaking, Image-Making</i> |
| Through | June 18 Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, Paris <i>New Realism</i> |
| Through | June 24 Neuberger Museum, Purchase <i>Fugitive Artist: Early Work of Richard Prince, 1974-77</i> |
| Through | July 8 Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, North Carolina <i>Vantage Point VI Tom Hunter</i> |
| Through | July 8 Menil Collection, Houston <i>Andy Warhol</i> |
| Through | July 8 Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York <i>Venice and the Islamic World</i> |
| Through | July 15 Fondation Beyeler, Basel <i>Signs of Modern Art</i> |
| Through | July 16 MOCA, Geffen Contemporary, Los Angeles <i>Wack! Art & the Feminist Revolution</i> |
| Through | July 18 Fondation Beyeler, Basel <i>Edvard Munch</i> |
| Through | July 22 Museo Correr, Venice <i>Sargent's Venice</i> |
| Through | July 29 Palazzo Strozzi, Florence <i>Cezanne in Florence</i> |
| Through | July 29 Kunstmuseum, Basel <i>Brice Marden</i> |
| Through | July 30 Museo Nacional d'Art de Catalunya <i>Neo-Impressionism</i> |
| Through | Aug. 5 Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek <i>Made in China</i> |
| Through | Sept. 2 High Museum, Atlanta <i>Decorative Arts of the Kings</i> |
| Through | Sept. 3 National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. <i>States & Variations: Prints by Jasper Johns</i> |
| Through | Sept. 3 Guggenheim, Bilbao <i>Anselm Kiefer</i> |
| Through | Sept. 9 J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles <i>Zoopsia: New Works by Tim Hawkinson</i> |
| Through | Sept. 2 Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice <i>Matthew Barney & Joseph Beuys</i> |
| June 6 - Sept. 23 | 52nd Venice Biennale: Vernissage June 7-9 |
| June 13 - 17 | Art 38 Basel, Switzerland |
| June 16 - Sept. 23 | Documenta 12, Kassel, Germany |
| June 17 - Sept. 30 | Sculpture Project Munster 07 |

Travel Bookshelf: Kansas City

Guides

Patti Delano. *Off the Beaten Path: Missouri, Insider's Guide*, 2007.

Michael J. Flynn. *City Smart: Kansas City, Insider's Guide to Kansas City*.

History and Local Color

David McCullough. *Truman*, 1993.

Rick Montgomery, et al. *Kansas City: An American Story*, 1999.

Joyce C. Hall. *When You Care Enough*.

William M. Reddig. *Tom's Town: Kansas City and the Pendergast Legend*.

Frank Driggs. *Kansas City Jazz: From*

Ragtime to Bebop — A History.

Henry Inman. *The Old Santa Fe Trail*, 2004.

Brian Burns, et al. *Walt Disney's Missouri: The Roots of a Creative Genius*, 2002.

Calvin Trillin. *Feeding a Yen: Savoring Local Specialties, from Kansas City to Cuzco*, 2004.

Art and Architecture

Thomas Hart Benton: *An American Original*, Nelson Gallery Foundation, 1989.

Kenneth Frampton. *Steven Holl: Architect*, 2003.

Steven Holl and Lebbeus Woods. *Steven Holl: Architecture Spoken*, 2007.

The Bloch Building: The Bold Expansion of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 2007.

George Erlich. *Kansas City, Missouri: An*

Architectural History 1826-1990.

Tim Janicke. *City of Art: Kansas City's Public Art*.

Deborah E. Scott and Martin L. Friedman.

Modern Sculpture at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art: An Anniversary Celebration, 1999.

Ellen R. Goheen. *The Collections of the*

Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 1993.

Edward Weston: *One Hundred Photographs*

from the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art and Hallmark Photographic Collection, 1982.

Roger B. Ward. *Dürer to Matisse: Master*

Drawings from the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 1996.

Elliot W. Rolands. *Italian Paintings 1300-1800: The Collections of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art*, 1996.

Fiction

Evan S. Connell. *Mrs. Bridge*, 1959. A great novel (and film) by an important writer and native Kansas Citian. If you're a local of a certain age, you'll recognize numerous characters and locations.

And just for fun...

Frank L. Baum. *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, 1900.