

Five Airports with Art Worth Seeing

By Katherine Dorsett and LaTrina White, CNN

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(CNN) -- Rushing around is standard airport behavior, but surprising collections of art at U.S. airports offer a moment for reflection -- for those who have the time.

Here are five airports where you can catch some art on the way to catching your flight:

1. Denver International Airport

Denver International Airport in Denver, Colorado, was one of the first airports in the United States to integrate art into its public spaces, according to its officials.

Some 30 permanent art exhibits are [on display at the airport](#), including "Mustang," a 32-foot tall, bright blue, cast fiberglass horse sculpture with gleaming red eyes.

New Mexico artist Luis Jiménez created the 9,000-pound piece -- the largest of his career.

Jiménez died while working on the sculpture in 2006 when a large section of the piece fell on him while it was being hoisted in his studio.

Today, "Mustang" greets drivers as they approach DIA and is the first thing visitors see as they depart the airport.

"Jiménez's work elicits strong feelings as his pieces are very striking," said Matt Chasansky, DIA public art administrator. "About 50% of people I've spoken with love his work, while the others hate it."

In addition to Denver, his sculptures are collected and displayed in public spaces and museums around the country

Jiménez was the son of Mexican immigrants and was born in El Paso, Texas, in 1940.

2. Sacramento International Airport

Sacramento International Airport in Sacramento, California, may be a mid-sized airport but it has big artistic ambitions.

Terminal A's baggage claim houses a piece called "Samson," which is two 23-foot tall pillars made from 1,400 pieces of luggage stacked on two wheeled carts. Brian Goggin's work appears to hold up

the ceiling. Steel beams attached to the airport's existing columns keep the structure sturdy.

"It does exactly what great public art is supposed to do: Create a sense of fun and whimsy in a normally utilitarian place," said airport spokeswoman Karen Doron.

Goggin's work landed in the coveted spot in 1998 after competing in Sacramento's [Arts in Public Places](#) program. "Samson" is one of the programs 8 selected pieces on display at the airport.

When the airport builds a new terminal, the airport will also be adding 13 new pieces of art, including a controversial sculpture by Lawrence Argent: a 56-foot-long red rabbit made of fiberglass leaping from the rafters into a stone suitcase on the floor.

Some wonder if the planned \$800,000 centerpiece is money well spent. Judge for yourself when it appears, planned for sometime next year.

3. Miami International Airport

Miami International Airport is the largest U.S. gateway for Latin America and the Caribbean. So it seems fitting that the airport's international baggage claim is home to a piece called "Ghost Palms" by artist Norie Sato.

Situated at five window bays along a 300-foot-long glass wall, the work takes its inspiration from the ubiquitous palm trees that populate the Miami-Dade County landscape.

Each of the five sites, 24 feet tall, expresses a specific, strong structure of the palm, whether the frond, the branch or the trunk.

Hand-painted and sandblasted glass, laminated glass, aluminum and terrazzo were used to create the work.

The colors in the glass are formed with embedded powders that reflect multiple spectrums of light, which not only change colors throughout the day, but alter as passengers move throughout the baggage claim area.

See [Miami's website](#) for more unique artwork at this international airport.

4. Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport

Atlanta, Georgia's Hartsfield-Jackson is one of the world's busiest airports, and it offers [plenty of art](#) for busy travelers throughout its six concourses.

On display now in Concourse E is a piece called "Concorde" by Alabama artist Craig Nutt. The wood carving of a corn on the cob flying in the air is part of Nutt's "Flying Vegetable" series.

The design was "inspired by jet airliners, their wings swept back, leaping into flight from the airport's runways," Nutt said.

Also on display in Concourse E are 15 murals created by students from all over the world, including

Pakistan, Denmark, Bulgaria and the United States.

These colorful pieces of art depict messages of world peace, community and friendship. The rotating exhibit was organized by The Colorful Art Society, Inc. and People to People International.

"These young artists used art to express their vision of peace and hope and we're proud to display their work in a global setting," said Mary Jean Eisenhower, granddaughter of President Dwight D. Eisenhower and President and CEO of PTPI.

5. Philadelphia International Airport

Business booms at Philadelphia International Airport, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and doesn't lag when it comes to its art.

In 1998, it established an exhibition program to house rotating art to display throughout its seven terminals. Currently, there are 17 rotating sites, and nine permanent pieces of artwork on display.

Terminal E houses a colorful mixed-media work entitled "Evolving Elements," by Philadelphia resident [James Dupree](#).

Made up of 20 panels, the mural is 30-feet long and 9-feet high.

"The enormity of it grabs people's attention because it is such a large, energized, colorful piece," said Leah Douglas, who selected the work and heads up the PHL's exhibition program.

To create his art, Dupree uses layers of vibrant paint colors, glosses and varnishes along with band embellishments that seem to jut from the surface.

"When people see my paintings, all they want to do is touch it," said Dupree.

The work addresses the "cultural static and all the noise and all the distractions in our lives," he said.

Other interesting pieces on display at PHL include a collection called "Streamlined Irons" by Jay Raymond, who has studied and collected uniquely designed clothing irons since the 1930s.

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/TRAVEL/12/23/five.airport.artwork/#%20for%20photographs>