

Jody Gray

# Arts and Culture in the Twin Cities

Something for Everyone

**W**e are excited to welcome you to the 2025 ACRL Conference in Minneapolis! Whether you are a history buff, art appreciator, theater enthusiast, or music lover, the Twin Cities has something for everyone.

## Museums and Galleries

The Twin Cities are home to numerous museums and galleries that span an extensive array of arts and history. The [Minneapolis Institute of Art](#) (MIA) has a vast collection that includes everything from ancient artifacts to modern masterpieces. The [Walker Art Center](#) is known for its focus on contemporary art, which includes galleries, film screenings, and live performances. Situated next to the Walker is the [Minneapolis Sculpture Garden](#), which features the iconic “Spoonbridge and Cherry.”



Spoon bridge and cherry by Adam Fagen.  
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The [Weisman Art Museum](#) (WAM), designed by Frank Gehry, is located on the University of Minnesota campus along the shore of the Mississippi River. Its collection includes media, paintings, photography, ceramics, Korean furniture, and decorative objects. Admission to the WAM is free.

Nearby, in downtown Minneapolis, is the [Minnesota Center for Book Arts](#) (MCBA) inside the [Open Book](#) Building. You can explore any or all of the 10 galleries within the MCBA dedicated to papermaking, paper marbling, letterpress printing, screen printing, bookbinding, and related arts.

St. Paul is home to the [Minnesota Museum of American Art](#) (MMAA), Minnesota’s oldest art museum. The MMAA recently completed a new wing that triples its gallery space. The [Center for Hmong Arts and Talent](#) (CHAT) highlights Hmong American artists and youth.

## Cultural Centers

The Twin Cities’ diverse population enriches the arts and culture scene. We encourage you to explore some unique cultural centers in the Twin Cities.

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The [Hmong Cultural Center Museum](#) examines Hmong history and culture through folk arts, drawings, and embroidery while the [Indigenous Roots](#) Cultural Arts Center opened in 2017 as a space to cultivate artists who are Native, Black, Brown, and Indigenous Peoples.

The [Minneapolis American Indian Center](#) recently reopened after extensive renovations. This center focuses on serving the large and tribally diverse American Indian population in the Twin Cities and houses the [Two Rivers Art Gallery](#). The [American Swedish Institute](#) is both a museum and a cultural education center located inside a historic mansion.

## Public Art

Art is not confined to galleries and stages in the Twin Cities. Throughout the cities, you will find murals, street art, and installations that reflect the cultural and social dynamics of the area. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) and the City of Minneapolis have created an [interactive map](#) of murals and public art.

## Theater and Performing Arts

The Twin Cities is known for its theater scene. It is second only to New York City in the number of live theater seats per capita. The [Guthrie Theater](#) is one of the most well-known theaters in the country, situated in downtown Minneapolis with a stunning view of the Mississippi River.

The [Fitzgerald Theater](#) is the oldest surviving theater in St. Paul and hosted the live radio program *Prairie Home Companion* with Garrison Keillor. First Avenue has owned the theater since March 2019, and it is known for its music, performing arts, and live podcasts.

The [Penumbra Theatre](#) in St. Paul features African American performances while the [Mixed Blood Theatre](#), [New Native Theatre](#), and [Theater Mu](#) amplify stories from diverse perspectives.

## Live Music

The Twin Cities are known for their outstanding musical talent: Prince, Bob Dylan, Semisonic, Soul Asylum, and the Replacements are but a few. Whether you prefer jazz, pop, rock, indie, or classical music, numerous live music venues exist.

[First Avenue](#) was immortalized in the film *Purple Rain* and continues to be the host to an enormous number of local and international acts. Over the years, this independently owned venue has grown to own and



Guthrie by Ben & Jena.  
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First Avenue by Doug Wallick.

operate several iconic music venues across the Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0).

Twin Cities including the [Depot Tavern](#), 7th Street Entry, the [Turf Club](#), and the [Fine Line](#).

One of the newer musical venues is [The Fillmore Minneapolis](#), which opened in 2020 in the North Loop District of Minneapolis. The [Dakota Jazz Club](#) on Nicollet Mall is not far from The Fillmore, and the Minnesota Orchestra is around the corner from the Dakota.

## **Conclusion**

The Twin Cities are home to world-class institutions and grassroots initiatives that reflect the area's arts and culture. Whether you explore renowned museums, stroll through neighborhoods searching for public art and murals, or discover hidden gems, your visit to the Twin Cities will be unforgettable. ✨