

# AUSTIN CITY OF MEDIA ARTS





# AUSTIN

## UNESCO City of Media Arts

In 2015, Austin achieved the distinction of being the first (and only) city in the United States to receive a “City of Media Arts” designation from UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization). The designation underscores Austin’s reputation as a trendsetting global city at the intersection of art, music, and digital technology, and an international hub for creative exchange.



**Economic  
Development**  
CITY OF AUSTIN



**AUSTIN**  
City of Media Arts

From individual artists to wide-ranging arts organizations, Austin has a rich and diverse cultural ecosystem. The city is recognized for its innovation and leadership in industries including music, film, gaming, and multidisciplinary digital experiences, and festivals such as South by Southwest (SXSW), Austin City Limits and the Fusebox Festival have made Austin a premiere cultural destination.

As a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN), Austin works individually and in partnership with other UNESCO cities to promote creativity and cultural industries, strengthen participation in cultural life, and assure the integration of culture into urban development plans.

For more information on Austin's UNESCO designation and activities, visit [www.austincreates.com](http://www.austincreates.com).

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CLAY ODOM



LUKE SAVISKY



## Art in Austin

Austin has a long tradition of presenting cutting-edge art installations that engage the community in creative and unexpected ways. In 2015, the City commissioned *Hello Lamp Post*, a ten-week project in which thousands of Austinites “conversed” with lamp posts, bus stops, and other objects throughout the City via text messages. More recently, the City commissioned *Wander*, an interactive, choose-your-own adventure installation featuring a sculptural beacon and mobile-optimized web app that takes visitors throughout downtown Austin, and *Shadowing*, a temporary public art installation that utilized city streetlights to capture and project shadows of passersby.

The Blanton Museum of Art (University of Texas at Austin), The Contemporary Austin, and numerous Austin galleries regularly exhibit local and national artists working with new media. The annual EAST and WEST Austin Studio Tours also showcase multidisciplinary installations from local creatives.



AUSTIN FILM SOCIETY



## Digital Media and Gaming

Austin values the creative industries as vital contributors to the community's character and prosperity. An economic impact study commissioned in 2011 estimates the total impact of gaming & digital media to be over \$990 million, with projected growth over the next decade. The city is home to leading gaming companies including Rooster Teeth, Owlchemy Labs and ArtCraft Entertainment, and gaming giant Richard Garriott.

## Film

Austin's filmmaking community, including celebrated directors Richard Linklater, Robert Rodriguez and Terrence Malick—and dozens of emerging filmmakers—has been on the forefront of adopting new technologies. Rotoscoping animation, for example, used in films such as Linklater's *Waking Life* and Rodriguez's *A Scanner Darkly*, was developed by Austinite Bob Sabiston.

Austin Studios, a 20-acre film and creative media production complex, anchors Austin's film community, providing infrastructure for local and national productions, including Rodriguez's *Spy Kids 3-D* and his forthcoming *Alita: Battle Angel*. Austin Studios generates significant cultural and economic impact for Austin annually.



Americans, 3000 horses

GRAHAM REYNOLDS

RYAN LAYDEN

AUSTIN CITY LIMITS MUSIC FESTIVAL



## Music

Austin is home to a wide range of musical genres, from country and western to hip-hop, to electronic digital music. Artists incorporating innovative and tech-focused components into their work have found a community of like-minded musicians and production professionals with whom to collaborate.

Austin-based SURVIVE, for example, received Grammy nominations in the Best Score / Soundtrack for Visual Media category in 2017 for their acclaimed *Stranger Things* Vol 1 & 2 soundtracks. Psych band The Black Angels has partnered with the Mustachio Light Show, to create programmed light installations for their world tour. Graham Reynolds, dubbed “the quintessential modern composer” by the *London Independent*, has collaborated with ballet and theater companies and visual artists to create multidisciplinary and immersive digital experiences. *SoundSpace*, a program of the Blanton Museum of Art curated by artist and musician Steve Parker, features hybrid “happenings” with art, music, and technology.

Austin establishments such as Empire Control Room have made a concerted investment in high-quality and flexible lighting and sound systems to support musicians using digital technologies.



X FESTIVAL  
LLA FROM A APRIL



LISA WOODS

TOPHER SIPES, BAYONNE, AND ALISA LONGORIA

## Festivals

Austin is home to many international festivals that bridge the fields of art and technology, including:

### **SXSW Music, Film and Interactive Conference and Festival**

Founded in 1987, SXSW is best known for its conference and festivals that celebrate the convergence of the interactive, film and music industries. The event features sessions, showcases, screenings, exhibitions, and a variety of networking opportunities. In 2018, the City of Austin Economic Development Department's Cultural Arts Division and SXSW established the UNESCO Media Arts Showcase, providing an international platform to spotlight the artists and cultural initiatives of the Media Arts Cluster.

### **No Idea Festival**

The annual No Idea Festival features musical improvisation, composition, installation, and sonic intervention, bridging music and technology.



## Fusebox Festival

Fusebox is a hybrid arts festival that champions adventurous works of art in theater, dance, film, music, literature, visual and culinary arts. The festival takes place over 5 days in venues and locations all over the city. Hundreds of local, national and international artists across all disciplines converge for one of the most unique cultural events in the country.

## PROTOS Festival

PROTOS features premier, pioneering and progressive work at the intersection of art, technology and social impact. The festival features electronic music and digital art; including international art and music exhibitions, panel discussions and dialogues, demos and workshops, meetups and parties, pop-up galleries, world premier performances and more.