

CRYSTAL BRIDGES MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART - THE NEW ARTISTIC DECLARATION



November 2011 brought many things, but art lovers focused their eager eyes on Arkansas. The Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, considered one of the nation's most important new art museums, opened on 11th November.

For years, the heir to the Wal-Mart fortune, Alice Walton, has been searching the country to collect pieces of artistic, cultural and historical value. Alice spent substantial amounts of money and in the course of her quest she found many admirers and many critics alike.

However, what stands out in the end is her determination to invest into her hometown of Bentonville, Arkansas and the opening of a fantastic museum which maps American history and depicts its spirit.

The museum has been created in a natural setting, a few miles from Bentonville downtown and there are several trails to it taking visitors through a romantic natural setting of local woods. The galleries also blend in with the natural setting, and feature lovely views of the grounds, including the Crystal Spring, a stream which gave the museum its name.

There are five galleries in the complex; Colonial, 19th Century, Modern, Contemporary and Announced Works. **At present, some 450 works of art are on display, with another 800 stored for special exhibitions and other 'on loan' events.** The opening exhibit celebrates the American Spirit and will hopefully lure many visitors.

It is unclear how much Ms. Walton spent while compiling this unique collection; however the Walton Family Foundation provided an \$800 million endowment for the museum. The \$20 million grant by Wal-Mart means no entrance fees which will hopefully lure art enthusiasts to this little town in Arkansas, with only 35,000 inhabitants.

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