

Islands

America's Most Impressive Sculpture Parks Offer World-Class Art Nestled Amid Stunning Landscapes

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Sculpture parks are often situated amid amazing landscapes by design. After all, what makes the experience of art-in-the-round more interesting and transportive is when you're also surrounded by trees, hills, and gardens. Around the United States, all kinds of sculpture parks exist to preserve and celebrate artists' work, from North Carolina's striking Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park to a quirky concrete park in Wisconsin's Northwoods. Not all are focused on a single artist, of course, and that's when some of these large-scale installations can get really interesting. Often termed "outdoor museums" by the organizations that steward them, parks like New York's Storm King Art Center and the remote Tippet Rise Art Center near Fishtail, Montana, display works by world-renowned artists amid beautiful, memorable scenery.

For this list, we focused specifically on parks that have spectacular landscapes to go along with their collections, including urban botanical gardens, woody hillsides, and rolling grasslands with mountain views. The 11 destinations below combine both non-profit and privately owned initiatives, all of which are open to the public either throughout the year or during specific seasons. They also represent a wide variety of regions, with numerous types of ecosystems to experience. The best part? You don't have to know a thing about art to appreciate these unique settings. A good sculpture nestled thoughtfully amid greenery can really influence your perspective — and you may learn a thing or two along the way.

To compile this list of must-see sculpture parks around the country, the author draws on her background in contemporary art and art history for knowledge of artists and architects, along with her visits to several of these parks. We've also researched the properties' official websites and consulted regional tourism sites for additional information and attractions well worth checking out if you go.

Tippet Rise Art Center (Montana)



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Located amid a breathtaking landscape that's owned by the prominent art collectors and philanthropists Peter and Cathy Halstead, Tippet Rise Art Center is a totally unique rural Montana destination that's open to the public every year between June and September. It's located about halfway between Bozeman and Billings, making it an ideal detour option if you're heading to Yellowstone National Park. The closest community is Fishtail, a strikingly gorgeous ranching community at the foothills of the Rockies, where fantastic outdoor recreation is at your doorstep.

At 12,500-acres, Tippet Rise is part sculpture park and part working sheep and cattle ranch. Situated amid the rolling landscape, sculptural pavilions and other artworks rise from the fields. And works by artists like Richard Serra, Wendy Red Star, Louise Nevelson, Ai Weiwei, and many more sit amid pastures with the Beartooth Mountains towering in the distance.

A summer music series also invites renowned performers from around the world to play beneath sculptural pavilions, but from mid-June to early October, you can also stop by on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays to hike and bike around the property. Alternatively, join a prearranged van tour of the sculptures. Reservations for all experiences are required, which can be made on Tippet Rise's website. It's a good idea to book as early as possible, as slots tend to sell out fast. The van tours and concert tickets are only \$10, though, and it's free to visit if you're doing a self-guided jaunt. Wheels of some kind are recommended if you plan to see a lot of work, as the distances between sculptures range from half a mile to 3 miles.

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