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OPEN KEYS



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Taubman Museum of Art: A Modern Architectural Marvel

Designed with a series of sharp peaks inspired by the Blue Ridge Mountains, Roanoke's Taubman Museum of Art is itself a modern artistic wonder. Since opening late last year, visitors from around the world have come to see the city's most contemporary structure.

"It really does stand out," says Scott Crawford, director of education. "It draws people's attention and they want to see what's happening inside."

Just as the Frank Gehry-designed Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, put the fishing village on the map, the Taubman is catapulting Roanoke onto the international art scene. The \$66 million project, designed by Los Angeles architect Randall Stout, features a striking glass-and-steel atrium and 10 galleries.

The museum boasts a 2,000-piece permanent

collection, and while much of the focus is on 19th- and early 20th-century American art (including works by Norman Rockwell and Winslow Homer), the collection also features contemporary art, Japanese prints, and Egyptian artifacts. Another must-see: the Leiber Gallery, which pays homage to American decorative arts with Judith Leiber's crystal-encrusted handbags and pillboxes.

Just as impressive are the temporary exhibits: Through October, view the rich portraits and religious works of 17th-century Florentine painters. And this month, check out Devorah Sperber's *A Strange Sense of Déjà Vu*, featuring a Persian rug made of 18,000 marker caps, and shower curtains that reveal a '68 VW bus.

110 Salem Ave. SE, Roanoke, 540-342-5760, taubmanmuseum.org

JOHN HAMILT



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