



Lauren Cross

Artist and Professor at the University of North Texas

Lauren Cross is a visionary filmmaker, teacher, curator, and interdisciplinary artist. But perhaps her most important role is that of community leader. Partnering with Fort Worth museums and artist collectives, Cross helps to push the creative community forward through projects that facilitate artistic expression. She's part of the Carter Community Artist initiative at the Amon Carter Museum, which connects diverse audiences with the collection and provides pathways into the art world for students. As a senior lecturer at UNT, she knows how valuable this real-world guidance can

be. "The most important idea that I teach is career and entrepreneurial development for artists, designers, and creatives. I find that it is a tool that empowers students the most," Cross says. "I love encouraging students that they have a unique voice and their own specific contributions they can make into the world." With summer teaching programs, her work with the Amon Carter, and a baby on the way — Cross is one busy visionary. You can see a new exhibition of her work later this year at the Carillon Gallery at Tarrant County College's South Campus. ▶

by Shilo Urban



Jessica Christopherson

Visit Fort Worth + Fort Worth Film Commission

Jessica Christopherson is spreading the message about the city's expanding creative culture far and wide, attracting visitors and filmmakers alike. Christopherson is the head of the Fort Worth Film Commission and the assistant director of marketing at Visit Fort Worth, the hospitality bureau for tourists and conventions. Since the Film Commission was established in 2015, she has worked tirelessly to advance Fort Worth's presence in the movie industry — and it's starting to pay off. "There is a really exciting energy in the city right now, and travelers and filmmakers are taking note,"

she says. "We want to spotlight the vibe that's emanating not only from major institutions like the Kimbell Art Museum, but also musicians, artists, and chefs." Visitors are quickly won over by Fort Worth's legendary friendliness, laid-back vibe, and can-do creative community. But first they have to get the message, and Christopherson is making sure that they do. She is currently courting several high-profile film and TV projects, and Visit Fort Worth attracts more and more tourists every year. "We share the city's welcome with the world." ▶

by Shilo Urban

Heather Laminack

Ferrier Custom Homes

In a land of "Bigger Is Better," Heather Laminack of Ferrier Custom Homes has been a strong advocate of sustainability and energy efficiency. Founded in 1984, Ferrier Custom Homes has been ahead of the curve since the beginning by preaching the importance of smaller and well-thought-out homes. If you have ever driven where Merrick Street meets Byers Avenue, you may be familiar with one of their projects — two sister homes with a thoughtful, minimalist style designed by Daniel Van Kunschik. Heather is also the first female president of the Greater Fort Worth Builders Association. "GFWBA was

nothing but encouraging and supportive," Laminack says. "They recognize that it is very important to our industry to help equip young women with resources to bridge the gap, so they can see that these careers aren't gender specific." Heather recalls growing up helping with her small family business and noticing there weren't any female architects, much less tradespeople. As a mother of two young sons, she hopes to be an example for her boys to crush gender norms in her field. "I feel like the tide is changing, and I couldn't be more excited to be a part of that change," she says. ▶

by Rachael Lindley



Josie Villa-Singleton

Eat This Fort Worth Food Tours

To truly understand the soul of a city, you have to taste it — and in Fort Worth, that means tacos and margaritas, brisket and beer. Explore hidden-gem taquerias and next-big-thing hangouts on a foodie adventure with Josie Villa-Singleton, who introduced Eat This Fort Worth Food Tours this spring. Designed for locals and travelers alike, the bus tours deliver a lively, off-the-beaten-path experience of the city. "We have an amazing food culture here," Villa-Singleton says. "I spent many weekends doing research for my taco tour and eating at dozens of taquerias, and I still haven't

even scratched the surface." A first-generation American and Fort Worth native, her advice to aspiring entrepreneurs in the city is to reach out and network. "Fort Worth has a spirit of collaboration, and I have found the community here to be supportive of each other, especially the food community. Up next? Singleton is partnering with Visit Fort Worth for a barbecue and brews tour, with more themed excursions arriving this fall. "It brings me great joy to share some of my favorite places in the city and tell the stories of what makes them special." ▶

by Shilo Urban

