

The Moment

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Wanderlust / Marfa, Texas

By [Egan](#)



Photo by Michele Teague Vintage

boots at JM Dry Goods.

“People come to Marfa and think all of Texas looks like this,” said Lyle Lovett, on stage at the Crowley Theater where he was performing this past weekend for the [Marfa](#) benefit. The Ballroom, an arts and performance space, was celebrating its sixth anniversary in this dusty town, which conjures up images of “The Last Picture Show” — save for the serious-looking Donald Judd pilgrims milling around town and the Prada Marfa installation on the outskirts. (Check out the bullet holes in the store’s awning, which was rumored to have been shot up by disgruntled cowboys.)

Michael Werner 4 East 77 New York New York 10075

While the [foundations](#) are meticulous shrines to the minimalist master, who came here to live and work in solitude in the 1970s, the Ballroom champions younger talent. Over the years the Ballroom has showcased bands like Japanther and Grizzly Bear as well as commissioned sprawling works like “Hello Meth Lab in the Sun,” by artists Jonah Freeman, Justin Lowe and Alexandre Singh, which became a buzzed-about installation at Art Basel Miami 2009.



Courtesy of Ballroom Marfa, David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles and Michael Werner Gallery, New York “Head (one-eyed),” 2009, by Thomas Houseago, left, and “Figure Head,” 2009, by Aaron Curry.

Last Friday, the Ballroom showed the debut of “Two Face,” a collaborative installation by the artists Aaron Curry and Thomas Houseago that features a series of primitive sculptures made from low-fi materials, which suggest influences from Picasso, pop art and the colossal Olmec head sculpture. (You can buy limited-edition prints of the show, which runs through Dec. 13, on the Web site.) Throughout the weekend there were plenty of highbrow offerings — exhibitions, screenings and parties — but perhaps the best way to take in Marfa is on a bicycle, zooming through the neighborhood streets to see how much or how little this West Texas town has changed. Here are some of the latest spots.

Though it’s been around since 2005, [Hotel](#) is still where all the action happens. The hotel is currently expanding its property across the street in a former Army storage hangar.

Telephone 212 988 1623 Facsimile 212 988 1774



Photo by Allison B. Smith Stay in a refurbished trailer at El Cosmico .

If you feel like sleeping closer to nature in big sky country, you can set up camp at [Cosmico](#), a boho-hipster campground brought to you by Liz Lambert, who created the too-cool-for-school San Jose Hotel in Austin. You can stay in one of several different refurbished trailers, eco-shack eggs, yurts (all arranged in concentric circles for a “spiral galaxy” effect) or pitch your own tent.

The French cafe **Cochineal** (115 West San Antonio Street) was opened last year by two New York refugees who worked at the Etats Unis restaurant on the Upper East Side. They’ve spent their time tweaking the menu and schooling the local teenage staff on micro greens and souffles.

The new Mexican joint **Tacos del Norte** (1501 West San Antonio/Highway 90) sits on the edge of town in a former gas station. (It seems that most buildings in Marfa were once a gas station or a feed store.) The chef, who recently moved from a nearby border town, dishes out some outstanding gorditas and sopes.

The owners of the **Food Shark** are currently on a research trip in Turkey and Italy (plus a pit stop at the Venice Biennale), but be sure to stop by the vehicle for some top-notch Mediterranean fare. (Open Tuesday through Friday from 11:30 to 3 under the pavilion between the railroad tracks and Marfa Book Company.)

Michelle Teague, a New York-based costume designer came to Marfa to work on the set of “There Will Be Blood” and decided to move here permanently when she became pregnant. With her business partner Ginger Griffins, she’s opened **JM Dry Goods** (203 East San Antonio Street), which sells a mix of Mexican textiles, vintage cowboy boots, beach hats, handmade soap and books about deadly insects.

Housed in a former funeral home, the brand new club is the brainchild of three partners, including a priest, hence the name. There’s a concert space as well as an ice house area outfitted with pinball machines, jukeboxes and pool tables. Sadly, no confessional.