

# Airport report

## Arts in the Airport

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Director of Aviation

Art and music are two important ways to showcase a city's unique ambiance, particularly in public structures. The use of the arts in a public setting has been shown to create an improved public environment through the enhancement of spaces, with the sights and sounds of quality artists and musicians that are unique in their field and their presentation. Today many cities, including New Orleans, are utilizing the arts in the "public realm" to creatively engage a community's sense of 'place'. As an entity of the City of New Orleans, Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport is pleased to be one of the city's showcases for the arts. Over the years, Armstrong International Airport has acquired a diverse art collection that is on permanent display in the terminal. Our distinct Armstrong Art Collection speaks to the richness of the Louisiana culture created by artists currently living and working in Louisiana and the collection includes paintings, sculptures, photographs, textiles and mixed media. The overall assemblage is valued at nearly \$1 million and is located both pre and post security so passengers and visitors alike may enjoy viewing while waiting for departures or arrivals. Many of the artworks were selected with assistance from the Arts Council of New Orleans.

The New Orleans Aviation Board began working with the Arts Council in 1990 to identify public art that could be installed during the reconstruction of Concourse C. Since music is the common language to convey culture, nationally recognized New Orleans musician Ellis Marsalis improvised a musical theme for the concourse that was digitized into a graphic format. The artists worked from this graphic format to create a variety of architectural enhancements that range from ceramic tile patterns to colored glass. Each artist was assigned a specific interior area in which to develop artwork installation or structural treatment based upon the musical theme. In addition to artwork on the concourse, an outstanding collection of three individual exhibits of photographs and an 1898 map of New Orleans donated by the New Orleans Jazz Foundation, the Louisiana State Museum and the William Hogan Jazz Archives at Tulane University has been installed as well.

When the New Orleans Aviation Board made a decision to rebuild Concourse D and create a new West Terminal Lobby, the Board turned once again to the local Arts Council to help amass a permanent collection that would create a visually exciting and positive impression on air travelers. In 1996, local artist Richard Cornelius Thomas was commissioned by the Board to create large murals that feature a tribute to the legends of jazz and the unique tradition of brass bands, grand marshals and second lines.

Music is present at Armstrong International, live and otherwise. The Airport serves as a stage for some of the finest brass bands in the city who welcome the millions of passengers that pass through the Airport each year. We also feature hundreds of recordings of local and nationally known musicians played year round over our public address system. These sounds provide a backdrop that is distinctly New Orleans and hopefully sets the tone for what will be an experience of a lifetime for visitors and a "welcome home" for our residents.

A public arts program in airports is becoming an important feature in their spaces traveled by passengers. As you travel through airports, look around in their busy and sometimes hectic environment. You may be surprised at the sights and sounds placed there for your enjoyment that can change that airport from an "any airport USA" to one that makes that city or region it resides in distinct. The next time you are at Armstrong International, take some time to enjoy the wonderful artwork displayed throughout the Airport. Until then, you can always download our Armstrong Art Collection brochure from our website, [www.flymsy.com](http://www.flymsy.com). ✈



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