

|A Wedding or an Art Installation? A Little of Both.

Some artists have found a new home outside of art galleries as couples strive to create interactive art experiences for their wedding guests.



Art installations are on the rise at weddings. Edoardo Tresoldi, an Italian artist and set designer, created transparent sculptures of wire mesh for a wedding reception. Credit...Designlab Experience

By Danielle Braff

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Kristin Banta is a [Los Angeles event planner](#) specializing in weddings, but you might not know this from her recent functions.

For one wedding, she designed a gigantic banana peel on the reception floor. In another, she worked with vendors to construct 250 feet of golden nautical rope to serve as a centerpiece. She had a flock of 5,000 paper cranes made for a third.

The strangest, though, may have been the antlers dipped in automotive paint. Or maybe it was the floating candy cloud reachable via a golden ladder.

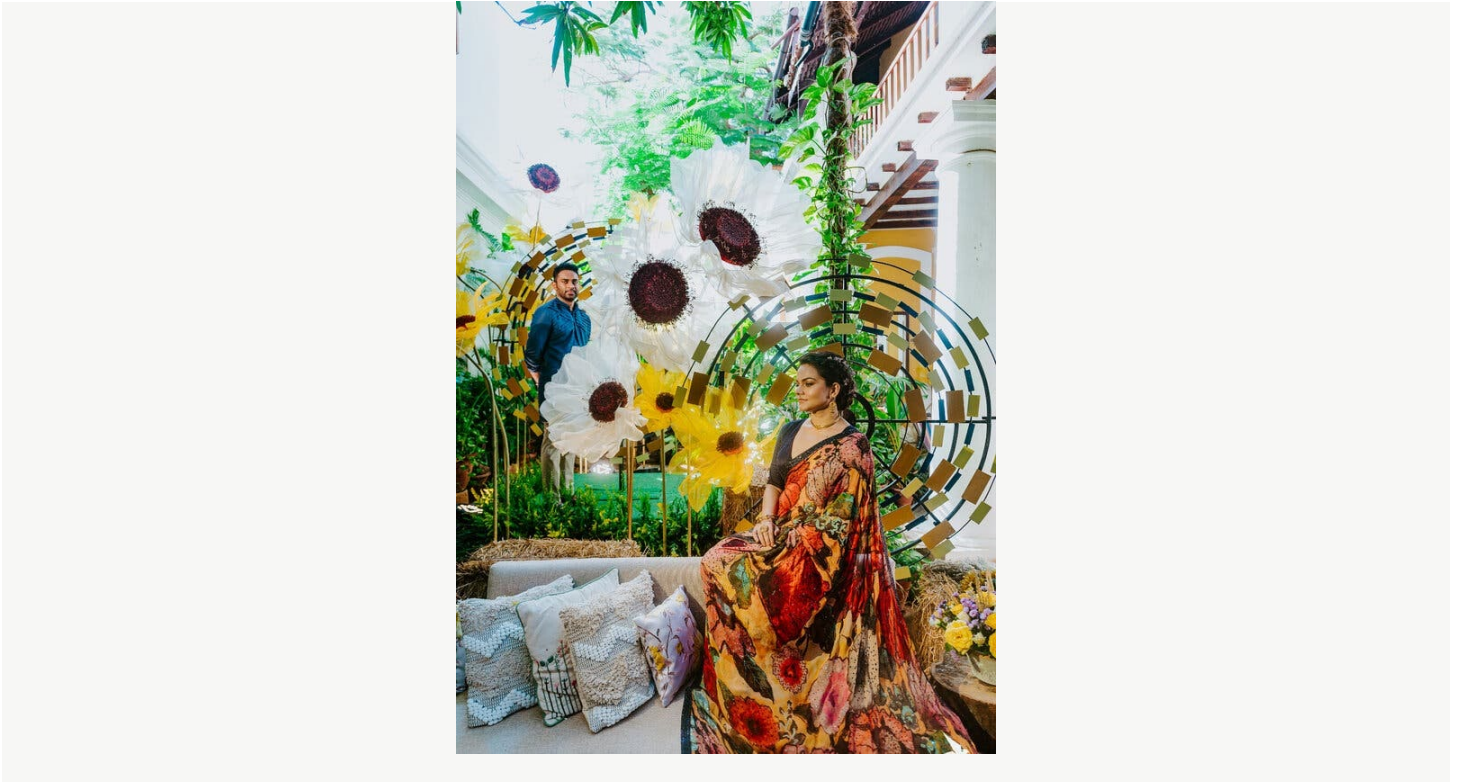
“Today’s couples want something provocative, memorable, experiential, tactile and reflective of who they are as a couple,” Ms. Banta said.

Ms. Banta added that although this artsy trend started before the pandemic, she has noticed an increase in new clients who want to incorporate installations in their wedding design.

It’s not enough anymore for a couple to toss a few floral centerpieces on a table, serve a meal, hire a DJ or band. Artists are now the newest in-demand vendor as some weddings are starting to resemble interactive art galleries.

Dr. Prethee Martina, a 29-year-old plastic and reconstructive surgeon in Chennai, capital of the state of Tamil Nadu in South India, has been obsessed with Vincent Van Gogh since she was a teen. So when it came time to plan her wedding to Dr. Ram Gautham, an orthopedic surgeon, last November in Pondicherry, India, she wanted her favorite artist to play a major role.

“I ended up going into medicine,” she said, “but I’ve always wanted the first artist I was introduced to to be a part of such an important day in our lives.”



This art installation created by Ambika Gupta, an artist and planner of the A cube project, was inspired by Van Gogh. Credit... Ombre by Harsheen Jammu

Dr. Martina asked her wedding planners to recreate the idea of Mr. Van Gogh’s paintings. They installed a starry night abstract outside the gates of her wedding venue in Pondicherry, a small French town in the heart of South India. Wheat and lavender fields were created along the pathways to the courtyard. They filled the courtyard with sunflowers, created fabric abstract sunflower backdrops and table arrangements, and transformed a blank courtyard with a green wall and a massive floral arrangement so it would become the iconic green bridge. The wedding for 50 people cost about \$50,000.

Other couples are looking to museums for inspiration. Beth Helmstetter, the founder and principal of [Beth Helmstetter Events](#), based in Los Angeles, hired an artist to create a sketch that was used on stationery as well as on the dance floor. For another wedding, Ms. Helmstetter said, she created a rose chandelier installation inspired by a work of art the couple had viewed at a museum.

“Art is always a source of inspiration for myself and for my clients,” Ms. Helmstetter said. “It’s quite common for us to hire artists to create backdrops, stationery and more.”

For artists, wedding creations are a relatively new experience. Josana Blue has been a working artist in Brooklyn for more than 20 years, and last year she was asked to do a large-scale installation at Sound River Studios in Long Island City, Queens, for a wedding. In October, she’ll be executing her second large installation.



Kendall Buster, a large-scale sculpture artist, used the floor plan as inspiration for a striking ceiling composed of interconnected translucent organic forms that produced a cloud effect. Credit...Designlab Experience



Two-dimensional images were transformed into an immersive multi-sensory, multi-performance experience created by the artists Sheikha Lateefa, Al Maktoum, Andy Cao and Xavier Perrot. Credit...Designlab Experience

“As artists, we all find our different venues, audiences and patrons,” Ms. Blue said. “We must have great versatility with our creative skills to not only stay employed, but also in keeping true to who we are as artists.”

The weddings she’s doing allow her to create massive installations that would otherwise be exhibited in galleries and museums. At the same time, she’s creating lifetime memories for couples, Ms. Blue said.

After the wedding, the couples are encouraged to keep their art installations if feasible. If not, they’re broken down by the artist or event planner and reused for other events. Jove Meyer, the founder and creative designer of [Jove Meyer Events](#) in New York, noted that one couple plan to save a massive canvas backdrop from their wedding for their home.

Artists aren’t the only new vendors recruited to the wedding world for art installations.

[Designlab Experience](#) was hired in 2014 for a 3,500-person wedding in Dubai to create a lucid dream, where guests are aware that they’re dreaming. To make this work, the company teamed up with artists to create ephemeral clouds of

Swarovski crystals clouds and three-dimensional magical creatures. The Covent Garden Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Pamela Nicholson, was also hired.



This colorful fabric installation, designed by Jove Meyer and created by Josana Blue, set the tone for a bold reception. Credit...Forged in the North

“Guests were immersed in a dreamlike space filled with 15,000 light sticks, 65,000 Swarovski crystals, 4,000 paper cranes, a full orchestra, birds, falcons, gazelles, flowers and fine cuisine,” said Hibah Albakree, the managing partner of Designlab Experience.

Of course, moods can be created on a much smaller scale.

Peter McKintosh, a theater set and costume designer in London, spent about \$2,500 for Harriet Parry, a florist, to transform a gastro pub into “A Midsummer Night’s Dream” for a wedding.

Mr. McKintosh wanted the arrangements to look edgy, so Ms. Parry placed spiky red roses, moss and fake butterflies throughout the pub to give it the desired effect.

Couples can also create their own murals, they can make hanging ribbon displays or they can reimagine anything they see in their favorite museum.

It’s sure to be a sold-out event.

More Wedding Art