

Birmingham is not often considered a hot spot for public art, but perhaps we need to take a closer look. Throughout the city, you can find art out in the open—maybe even along the streets you travel every day—representing a kaleidoscope of styles. Here are a few of my favorites, along with the locations so that you can spot them the next time you drive by.



**[Rosette Bobbin](#)**, off 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, next to UAB's [Spencer Honors House](#)

Imagine a giant circular stained-glass window, but one that's sitting upright on the ground, and you've got an idea of what this sculpture looks like. The four-ton piece actually does resemble the window in the adjacent Honors House, formerly a church. But it's also got an industrial connection, since it's made of cast iron that has been allowed to rust a bit. Artist Vaughan Randall created the piece when he worked with the metal arts program at [Sloss Furnaces](#).



**[Steelworker](#)**, on 8th Ave. N. in front of the [Birmingham Museum of Art](#)

If Vulcan didn't exist, I would nominate this guy, sculpted by Eddie Luis Jimenez, as the city's mascot. He casts a watchful, larger-than-life eye over the street, but I really admire this sculpture because it feels like Birmingham. This piece—and *Rosette Bobbin*—use elements of the city's

industrial past to inspire modern art.

Sculptures in *Kelly Ingram Park*, 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. N.

The pieces in this park, created by James Drake and symbolizing the historic events of the civil rights movement that took place there, are deceptively simple—because they are also very effective at involving viewers in the symbolism. [Police Dog Attack](#), for example, forces you to weave around the sharp teeth of the snarling sculpted dogs placed at eye level. Likewise, when you view *Children's March*, you are simultaneously standing with the young protesters—and standing in jail with them. With *Fire Hosing of Demonstrators*, you walk through a doorway, directly into the line of fire. This is subtle but powerful art.

And if you want to wander off the beaten path a bit in search of sculpture, stroll down to the metal arts area of Sloss Furnaces to see an amazing, amusing collection of pieces created by the resident artists. You'll spot everything from a giant robot head and metal clothing (cast from real clothes) hanging on a clothesline to little people hiding in the weeds and even an enormous book layered with metal letters. It's a fun, random collection unlike anything you'll see in a museum.

Learn more about Birmingham's public art at [Birminghamart.org](http://Birminghamart.org) and [Bhamwiki.com](http://Bhamwiki.com). And if you've got a favorite piece, post it here so everyone can check it out.