

by KATE SMITH  
photography PHOTOGEN INC.

# Museum-Worthy WEDDINGS

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facing pages  
CULTURE-LOVING  
COUPLE ALLISON  
RUFVOLD AND  
BRETT CADOGAN  
WERE THE FIRST  
TO HOST THEIR  
WEDDING AT  
THE MINNEAPOLIS  
INSTITUTE OF ARTS.

One OF THE BEST THINGS ABOUT HOSTING YOUR WEDDING at a Twin Cities museum is that no matter which direction you're looking—out, at bustling Hennepin Avenue from the Walker Art Center's terraces, or in, at one of the world-class exhibits in the galleries at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts—you're always getting the best view. But that's only the first of many reasons brides and grooms are forgoing more traditional venues in favor of the castles, galleries and restored churches housing artistic treasures.

Spaces ranging from the Weisman Art Museum (WAM) to the American Swedish Institute (ASI) and Minnesota History Center are prime locations for couples who want to express their love for each other, along with their love for their

community, and passion for art and design. For Allison Rufsvold and Brett Cadogan, who were the first couple to be married at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA) in 2013, culture played a huge role in their decision.

"The MIA had a lot of strong memories for me growing up, and it's a big staple in Minneapolis, so it was very appropriate for us," Rufsvold says. "We're very involved in the city, we live in the city and participate in a lot of its cultural

happenings, so we wanted to do something that supports the culture as part of the wedding. It was a big draw."

For the day of the wedding, that meant bringing in a local band. "They had a lot of instruments and they needed a stage. It turned out awesome, and the MIA was really supportive," she adds.

Kate Sands and Juan Bonfante, who married at the Walker last May, had similar reasons for choosing an iconic and versatile Minneapolis location. The couple shares a love of poetry, photography and writing, and "no matter where we were going to get married, we wanted it to

be integral to the community, and to play a role in improving it in some way through art and creative expression," says Sands. "The Walker really spoke to us as a space."

Regardless of the event's cultural underpinnings—the ASI, for example, has hosted a traditional Chinese wedding, a large Persian wedding, a couple whose officiant was ordained in the Church of the Latter-Day Dude and "folks exploring their Scandinavian connection," according to Laura Cederberg, communications and marketing manager—it's the spaces themselves that allow for such diversity in design and direction.

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KATE SANDS AND JUAN  
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#### ARCHITECTURE AND ART

Whether you're considering the WAM, with its stainless steel facade designed by world-famous architect Frank Gehry, or the elegant and contemporary layout of the Minnesota History Center clad in Minnesota granite and limestone, each venue's unique architecture, inside and out, makes quite an impression on guests.

"The museums in town are usually larger facilities, so they have a lot of beautiful function spaces for you to select from," says Rachelle Mazumdar, director of weddings and events for Style-Architects in Minneapolis. "It's also easier to do a ceremony and reception in places like these, because you aren't trying to flip just one room."

Mazumdar, who worked with brides at two of the three weddings hosted by the MIA last summer, cites that space as an example of a museum with sophisticated indoor and outdoor capabilities. "They have this beautiful courtyard space, with a center labyrinth that makes a fun focal point for a beautiful cocktail reception before moving guests on to something like the atrium," she says. Other venues with these capabilities include the 11-acre Minneapolis Sculpture

Garden adjacent to the Walker and the courtyard between the ASI's Turnblad Mansion and Nelson Cultural Center, which opened in 2012.

"It has been increasingly popular for wedding receptions to be held in our courtyard, with cocktail hour in the mansion before dinner and dancing in Larson Hall," Cederberg adds. As in many museums, guests are encouraged to explore the galleries between the ceremony and reception (as long as they leave food and drinks behind, a common request at most museums and galleries).

For something strictly indoors and intimate, the Museum of Russian Art (TMORA) allows couples and their guests to spend the evening up-close and personal with its exhibits. "It's very open, with two stories and a little walkway on the upper gallery," Mazumdar says. "So you not only see the artwork on your level, but guests can mingle on both stories, and you don't feel like you've lost your group."

#### NEW USE FOR VINTAGE SPACE

Though they're often among the oldest spaces in town (the Turnblad Mansion was completed in 1908 and TMORA is tucked inside a 1935 Colonial Revival






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Church), museums and art galleries are still a largely untapped resource for wedding venues. Mazumdar often advocates on behalf of museums for brides and grooms who are looking for something a little different. "So many venues are becoming overused; you see the same ones over and over again," she adds. Rufsvold agrees. "It's nice to be one of the first in a different place that you can really make your own."

There are some things to keep in mind when choosing a museum for your wedding, however; it's important to understand what it means to host an event at many of these historic venues.

First, you may have to be flexible with scheduling your wedding date and arrival time on-site on the big day. Often, brides and grooms must work around the museum's business hours, so ceremonies and receptions generally start later. "If a couple is willing to see one another before the ceremony, the Walker is the perfect place to do the reception and ceremony, but you really have to consider your timeline," Sands says.

Second, you may find there are restrictions on the kind of food, drink, music and décor you can bring in. Many places don't allow red wine, certain kinds of flowers, confetti, candles or signs affixed to walls or doors. At the Minnesota History Center, the noise level of DJs and bands has to be taken into account. You may also find you can't necessarily choose the décor, much less the art. "You never know what kind of exhibit is going to be there," Mazumdar says. "If you're at TMORA, for example, and you're right next to a painting and you don't particularly care for it, you're potentially in trouble."

Third, in addition to the typically higher than average price tags, museums and galleries can be more difficult to work with if you have last-minute changes. "They want to know your every move in advance, in order to notify security and guards at various checkpoints," Mazumdar says. "But because of this, they are also very organized; you will never go into a space not having your event well-planned, because they will require it to be well-planned."

Which leads us to the other big benefit: Museums and art galleries in the Twin Cities want to work with you, and they want your wedding to be the one you've always envisioned. Rufsvold says she received a call about a new installation just a few days before her wedding, and after giving it some thought, decided she appreciated the art but ultimately felt it didn't go with her theme. "The MIA was completely accommodating," she says; it was a projection installation, which could easily be turned off. "I think the one thing you have to keep in mind, is that when you get married in other venues, you are the No. 1 priority. But in an art museum, you and the art are both priorities, and they have a fine balance between protecting the art and letting you do what you want to do. In the end, you just need to be open and respectful." \*

## MUSEUM PROS + CONS CHEAT SHEET

### Pro

#### ENTERTAINMENT VALUE

*Request access to your venue's galleries and let guests tour the spaces during your cocktail reception.*

#### PARKING

*Many venues have their own surface lots and underground parking, saving you and your guests from those pesky valet fees.*

#### DÉCOR IS PART OF THE PACKAGE

*You can let the art do the work for you. Bride Kate Sands chose a middle ground at the Walker, with simple centerpieces from her mother's garden. "It's such an interesting museum, we didn't want to detract too much from the natural space."*

#### NOOKS FOR PHOTOGRAPHY

*Bride Allison Rufsvold recommends finding a photographer who will "find all the hidden gems, because you know there are so many cool places" to have photos taken at your chosen venue.*

### Con

#### WORKING AROUND MUSEUM HOURS

*Many times this means being flexible with your schedule: Are you OK with a later ceremony and reception?*

#### NO CONTROL OVER EXHIBITIONS

*It's a bigger issue at venues where art is front and center, although some brides have found museums to be accommodating in moving installations. At venues like the Walker, where reception space is outside galleries, it isn't usually a problem.*

#### THE "THINGS YOU CAN'T BRING" LIST

*Red wine, candles, banners, balloons, glitter, confetti, flowers with certain pollens, signs and (at some places) loud music. Are any of these items on your must-have list? You may want to rethink your museum venue.*

## WORKS OF ART

### Top Twin Cities Museum Venues

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Minneapolis, 612.871.4907, [asimn.org](http://asimn.org)

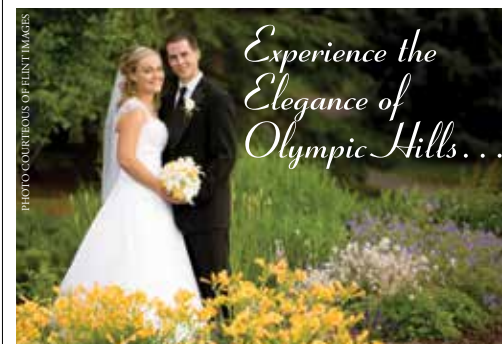
MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS  
612.870.3000, [artsmia.org](http://artsmia.org)

MINNESOTA HISTORY CENTER  
St. Paul, 651.259.3000, [minnesotahistorycenter.org](http://minnesotahistorycenter.org)

THE MUSEUM OF RUSSIAN ART  
Minneapolis, 612.821.9045, [tmora.org](http://tmora.org)

WALKER ART CENTER  
Minneapolis, 612.375.7600, [walkerart.org](http://walkerart.org)

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