



WHERE IT'S AT

**An Insider
Design Guide
from IIDA CEO
Cheryl Durst**

CHICAGO DESIGN WEEK 2025

IIDA



You may have been to Chicago...

but you haven't really been to Chicago until you've checked out **IIDA CEO Cheryl Durst's** secret spots to enjoy a hit of design in the Windy City.



THE LIST

Mural Magic

RIVER NORTH/LOOP

One of Chicago's best pieces of public art is tucked away on a quiet side street, adorning the back of the Chicago Cultural Center. "**Rush More**," by MacArthur fellow and superstar artist **Kerry James Marshall**, recognizes some of the powerhouse women who shaped Chicago's culture, and it's a great chance to pause and appreciate.

 **130 N. Garland Ct.**



Home Sweet Home

RIVER NORTH/LOOP

IIDA makes its home in an elegant skyscraper completed by the Office of Mies van der Rohe in 1970, just one year after Mies' passing. Stop in and see us: our offices, designed by **Gensler**, are an exquisitely welcoming example of workplace design. Also well worth a visit: the Chicago Architecture Center, on the ground floor.

 [111 E. Wacker Dr.](#)



Beauty of a Bridge

RIVER NORTH/LOOP

Chicago's most famous span, the 1920 DuSable Bridge, crosses the Chicago River at Michigan Ave. The Beaux Arts bridge was designed to resemble a Parisian bridge; the bas reliefs depict four key moments in Chicago history. And if you remember the movie *The Untouchables*, visit the lower level of the bridge, where Kevin Costner's character met Sean Connery's for the first time.

 [Michigan Ave. and the Chicago River](#)



Poetic Space

RIVER NORTH/LOOP

Poetry and Chicago have a long love affair, and the headquarters of the Poetry Foundation, designed by **John Ronan Architects**, was created to elegantly unfold like a poem. The hidden, tree-lined courtyard is open to the public daily; the contemplative interior, which features a poetry library and a gallery, is open Wednesday through Saturday.

 **61 W. Superior St.**



Deco Details

RIVER NORTH/LOOP

If you're looking for a bit of Art Deco design in Chicago, look no further than **the Mart**, one of our best-known examples. My favorite glimpse of the Deco style is one you can't miss: during your inevitable wait to ascend from the lobby, check out those gorgeous elevator doors.

 **222 W. Merchandise Mart Plaza**



Meditative Moment

RIVER NORTH/LOOP

If you're in need of a restful break, enjoy the Chicago River from its quietest vantage point. The Vietnam Veterans Memorial, on the south bank, offers a memorial fountain flanked by wide stairs perfect for sitting in the sunshine with a cool iced tea.

 **Chicago Riverwalk, between Wabash St. and State St.**



Designer View

RIVER NORTH/LOOP

Hidden atop another 1920s skyscraper, the rooftop bar at the LondonHouse hotel (with interiors designed by **Simeone Deary**) is the best view in the city, with all of Chicago's riverfront architecture arrayed for your enjoyment. The gang's all here, from Mies to Bertrand Goldberg to Jeanne Gang.

 **85 E. Wacker Dr, 22nd Floor**



Art (with Cocktails)

RIVER NORTH/LOOP

A favorite place to sneak away: the Langham Hotel lobby, designed by **Lauren Rottet**, features a glittering modern setting punctuated with astounding art. It's like design nirvana, with a gallery mixed in, with delicious cocktails. Any takers?

 **330 N. Wabash Ave.**



Cool Kid Bookstore

RIVER NORTH/LOOP

Two irresistible words: secret bookstore. **Exile in Bookville** is an indie bookstore with a rock vibe (90s kids will get the Liz Phair reference ...) and connections to the city's music scene, all tucked into the second floor of Chicago's historic Fine Arts Building.

 **410 S. Michigan Ave. Suite 201**



Speaking of Libraries

RIVER NORTH/LOOP

We weren't really, but I can talk books anytime. And if you'd like your books with a side of speakeasy, just step into the Library at Gilt Bar. It's a Mart-adjacent hideaway that will give you that vintage speakeasy feel ... with books.

 [230 W. Kinzie St.](#)



Winner, Winner

FULTON MARKET

A must stop as you make the Fulton Market rounds: the public spaces at 800 Fulton Market, a winner in IIDA's 2023 Interior Design Competition. Designed by **SOM**, the soaring lobby makes inventive use of a material deeply associated with Chicago: brick.

 [800 W. Fulton St.](#)



Streetwear Surprise

FULTON MARKET

Notre combines curated fashion (including vintage pieces) with interior design that levels up to incredible. How cool is the “stramp” entry by **Norman Kelley**?

 **118 N. Peoria St.**



Bespoke Basement

FULTON MARKET

The glossy, seductive interiors at the Hoxton are a highlight of a hospitality-focused neighborhood. Designed by **AvroKo**, the spaces sing with saturated color that extends all the way down into the basement, where Lazybird provides a modern take on a speakeasy, with meticulously designed cocktails.

 [200 N. Green St.](#)



Architectural Art

FULTON MARKET

There's plenty of street art out there, but the understated, soulful portrait of West side streetwear pioneer Joe Freshgoods by Portuguese artist **Alexandro Farto (Vhils)** on the side of a building on Morgan St. is something else. Vhils' technique employs construction tools to chip and grind away portions of the wall, creating a relief effect when paint is applied. The result is unique, arresting art.

 [301 N. Morgan St.](#)



Have it Their Way

FULTON MARKET

A visit to McDonald's HQ, with gorgeous lobby interiors designed by **Studio O+A**, is also a chance for an international fast-food snack. Check out the global menu, and you might get a taste of how they McD's in Malaysia (Criss Cut Chips, here we come!)

 **1039 W. Randolph St.**



Take the El

FULTON MARKET

You haven't been to Chicago until you've ridden the el, and the Green Line CTA Morgan station allows you to ride with a side of cool modern design by **Ross Barney Architects**. Created around an industrial materiality that includes glass and perforated metal, the bold, contemporary station is notably artful — right down to artist-designed bike racks.

 **958 W. Lake St.**



Design Pioneer

FULTON MARKET

Morlen Sinoway was the birth of the cool in Fulton Market — he brought high design to the warehouse district with **Morlen Sinoway Atelier**, pioneered a design street fair, and continues to deliver a deliciously curated selection today. Hint: check out the jewelry.

 [1052 W. Fulton St.](#)



Yes, Chef

FULTON MARKET

Restaurant design is a high stakes game in Chicago, and the immersive atmosphere at Ever, chef Curtis Duffy's fine dining destination, was created by **Lawton Stanley Architects** as a moody, modern masterpiece. Next door is cocktail lounge After, which includes (yes!) another secret library room hidden behind the coat closet. Bonus points: the kitchen was featured in "The Bear."

 [1340 W. Fulton St.](#)



Secret Street

FULTON MARKET

Gin Alley — named after female Fulton Market real estate pioneer Sue Ling Gin, not the juniper-based booze — is a hidden cobblestone alley that reads “European vacation.” Food (such as BBQ from Green Street Smoked Meats) and drink are available down the alley, and you don’t need a passport to be transported.

 [114 N. Green St.](#)



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