

Brazilian Painter Tony Paraná Named Cottonwood Art Festival's 2026 Fall Featured Artist

Rooted in memories of Brazil and shaped by a passion for community, the self-taught artist layers cultural identity and experience into stories of connection.

RICHARDSON, TX, UNITED STATES, July 21, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Cottonwood Art Festival is proud to announce Houston artist Tony Paraná as the Featured Artist for the Fall 2026 festival, celebrating a career defined by vibrant storytelling, cultural heritage, and a lifelong commitment to community through the arts.



Fall 2026 Cottonwood Art Festival with artwork by Featured Artist Tony Parana

Born in Bahia, Brazil, Paraná brings the colors, traditions and everyday experiences of his childhood to life through expressive paintings inspired by family, community and the human experience. His work reflects the energy of Brazilian street festivals, neighborhood markets, coastal landscapes and the people whose stories have shaped his artistic journey.

"I never imagined I would become an artist," said Paraná. "When I moved to the United States in 2002, I simply woke up one morning and decided to start painting. That decision changed my life."

A self-taught artist, Paraná creates intuitively, often beginning each painting with quiet reflection before allowing the work to evolve naturally. His paintings blend memory, emotion and cultural identity, inviting viewers to discover stories that connect people across generations and communities.

Beyond the canvas, Paraná is an accomplished musician, capoeira instructor and community leader. Throughout his career, he has dedicated himself to expanding access to the arts through education, public exhibitions and collaborative cultural programs. He founded the Montrose Art Society in Houston and later created the Mobile Art Space for the Artists (MASA), a repurposed

shipping container that serves as a free community gallery and creative space.

Being selected as Cottonwood Art Festival's Featured Artist holds special significance for Paraná.

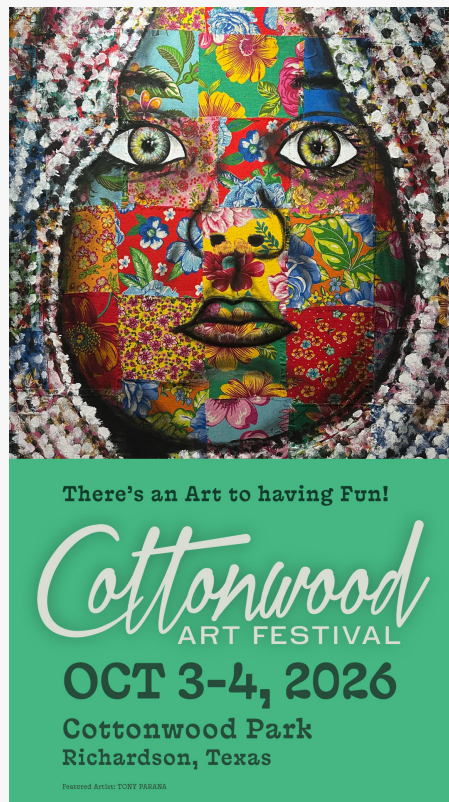
"I applied to Cottonwood five times," he said. "It's one of the best art festivals in the country. When I was finally accepted, I immediately felt a connection with the people there. Visitors truly engage with the artwork and the artists. Being selected as the Featured Artist is incredibly meaningful and makes me believe even more in the work I'm creating."

Festival organizers say Paraná's passion for storytelling, cultural connection and community embodies the spirit of Cottonwood Art Festival.

"Tony's work captures moments that are both deeply personal and universally relatable," said Dianna Lawrence, Festival Director and Superintendent of Community Events. "His paintings invite viewers to slow down, connect with the stories before them, and celebrate the diverse experiences that unite us. We are honored to recognize him as our 2026 Fall Featured Artist."

Today, Paraná continues to create from his Houston studio while balancing life as an artist, educator, musician and father of three. His newest collections explore the evolution of identity, family and culture through bold color, expressive composition and a distinctly personal perspective.

Visitors to the Fall 2026 Cottonwood Art Festival will have the opportunity to meet Tony Paraná and experience his latest body of work during the festival.



Fall 2026 Cottonwood Art Festival in Richardson, with artwork by Featured Artist Tony Parana



Tony Parana at Cottonwood Art Festival in Richardson, Texas

Location and Hours

□ [Cottonwood Park, 1321 W. Beltline Rd, Richardson, Texas](#)

□ October 3-4, 2026 open Saturday 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

□ Featuring 180 artists, food court, craft beer garden, entertainment on two stages, and children's art stations

For more information about the festival, visit

www.cottonwoodartfestival.com. To learn more about Tony Parana and his work, follow on social media at www.instagram.com/tonyparana/.

About Cottonwood Art Festival

Cottonwood Art Festival is celebrating its 57th year and is a juried show ranked among the top fine art shows in the country. Local artists staged the first festival at the scenic Cottonwood Park in Richardson, Texas in its humble beginnings in 1969. Cottonwood has since established itself as an internationally award-winning signature art event and become a tradition within the community. The festival designed outreach programs as innovative tools to mentor students and broaden the interest in visual arts and bring the art world into classrooms.

Dianna Lawrence

City of Richardson

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Tony Parana in Richardson at Cottonwood Art Festival



Artwork by Tony Parana as featured artist for Cottonwood Art Festival in Richardson Texas

