

THE NEW YORKER

ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

ALICE'S WONDERLAND

A Walmart heiress builds a museum in the Ozarks.

BY REBECCA MEAD

Thanks in part to the influence of Don Bacigalupi, who is a specialist in contemporary art, Walton has lately focussed more energy on that sphere: recent purchases include a Warhol silk-screen of Dolly Parton and a Chuck Close portrait of Bill Clinton. One of Crystal Bridges' signature pieces is a monumental sculpture by Roxy Paine of a treelike form, "Yield," which will stand at the entrance. Another contemporary work, "After the Last Supper," by Devorah Sperber, is a bravura reimaging of Leonardo's fresco made from hanging spools of thread, and it is already revealing some of the challenges that the museum may face as it attracts people who have rarely, if ever, visited a museum. When Bacigalupi and Sandy Edwards, the deputy director for museum relations at Crystal Bridges, were showing me

some slides of works in the collection, Edwards recalled having shown the Sperber to a local group. "The Christians really got into that 'After the Last Supper' idea," she said. "They said, 'After the Last Supper, things just weren't the same.'" Bacigalupi laughed loudly. "Nothing was ever the same—I never thought of that," he said, before remarking that this would be an excellent opportunity to use a wall text to explain the role that visual quotation plays in contemporary art.