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Marvels at the Museum

Whether it's a scenic seascape in a range of oils or hand-blown glass made to look like a decaying strawberry (yes, that's a thing), Boston area museums highlight the beauty in pretty much everything. Here is where to wander for inspiration and appreciation. ✂ **CHERYL FENTON**



1 THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

Sweeping waterfront views add to the artistic experience at this contemporary art museum. Whether it's a film, a performance or traditional visual media, the ICA engages your senses in the most unique ways (past exhibits have included two-story slides). One of America's oldest contemporary museums, the ICA pays homage to the importance of

the likes of Gauguin, Picasso and Warhol. Most recently, Yayoi Kusama's highly anticipated exhibit "LOVE IS CALLING" (through Feb. 7, 2021), a kaleidoscope of polka-dotted tentacles, sold out in 90 minutes. Timed tickets are required for the exhibit.

25 HARBOR SHORE DRIVE, WWW.ICABOSTON.ORG



2 HARVARD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

The Harvard Museum of Natural History reminds us that nature is the original masterpiece. Cases are packed with zoological specimens, from tiny hummingbirds and deer mice to rare Indian rhinoceros and one of the largest Amazon pirarucu ever caught. View fossils and skeletons alongside marvelous minerals, including a 1,600-pound amethyst geode. “Glass Flowers” is a creative approach to flora, with more than 4,300 hand-blown glass plant models. Through March 1, 2020, that beauty takes a turn with “Fruits in Decay,” which explores diseases through detailed glass strawberries, peaches and more.

26 OXFORD ST., CAMBRIDGE, WWW.HMNH.HARVARD.EDU

3 MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

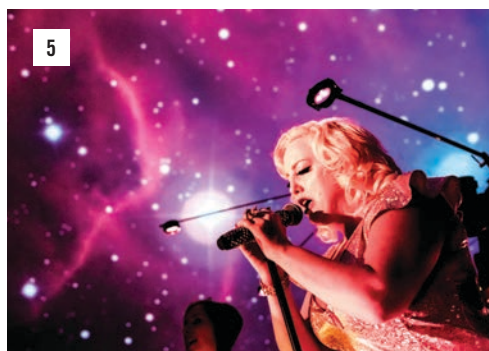
While some consider the ground’s larger-than-life baby heads (“Night” and “Day” by Antonio López García) a bit creepy, the museum’s nearly 500,000 works of art are, beyond dispute, highly impressive. From ancient Egyptian to contemporary, the MFA boasts gilded icons of the Italian Renaissance, one of the largest collections of Monets outside of Paris, and objects from global locales. “Ancient Nubia,” the latest feather in its cap, showcases statues, jewelry and architecture from temples and pyramids. Grab a bite at the new 465 Bar and Restaurant or feed your soul during Namaste Saturdays—morning yoga in the soaring glass Shapiro Family Courtyard.

465 HUNTINGTON AVE., WWW.MFA.ORG

4 PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM

When America’s oldest continuously operating museum builds an addition, the art world pays attention. So stands the Peabody Essex Museum’s new, 40,000-square-foot wing, with three gallery floors, a light-filled atrium and a 5,000-square-foot garden. In addition to PEM’s beloved highlights, the new space includes one of the country’s finest maritime exhibits, as well as Fashion and Design (think Louboutins and Asian moon beds) in the Iris and Carl Apfel Gallery (Iris commands her own corner in the gift shop), and a stunning wall installation from graffiti artist Vanessa Platadis.

161 ESSEX ST., SALEM, WWW.PEM.ORG



“Enjoy grown-up entertainment under the Charles Hayden Planetarium dome.”

5 MUSEUM OF SCIENCE

Known for its vibrant take on science past and present, the MOS features more than 700 interactive permanent exhibits and live presentations, revolving exhibits, IMAX films and Planetarium shows. On view through Jan. 5, is one of the world's most visited traveling exhibits, "BODY WORLDS & The Cycle of Life." Winter also brings about train-themed fun, including the Polar Express 4-D experience. Adults can enjoy experiences tailored to them under the Charles Hayden Planetarium dome—Stevie Nicks tribute Edge of Seventeen on Nov. 7 and Cole-slaw's Corner drag show on Nov. 21.

1 MUSEUM OF SCIENCE DRIVEWAY,
WWW.MOS.ORG

6 JOHN F. KENNEDY PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

Located on 10 acres overlooking the sea, the striking I. M. Pei building boasts theaters, digital archives, dramatic multimedia and a recreation of Kennedy's Oval office. This fall, until Nov. 28, is the last chance to see "JFK 100: Milestones & Mementos." At just over a year old, the "Ernest Hemingway: A Life Inspired" exhibit includes the writer's personal papers, audiovisual material and artifacts. The museum also hosts a wonderfully varied series of author talks or "Forums", where the topics range from White House desserts and civil rights to TV correspondent and humorist Mo Rocca's take on notable, deceased people.

COLUMBIA POINT, WWW.JFKLIBRARY.ORG

7 ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM

Wondering why some art frames hang empty throughout the 15th century Venetian palace of American art collector and philanthropist Gardner? They're placeholders from the infamous 1990 heist, the largest property theft in recorded history. What remains is an impressive collection of more than 16,000 objects, including Rembrandt, Botticelli, Raphael and Matisse. The interior courtyard is the perfect place for a bistro lunch (the chef occasionally matches dishes with art) or, perhaps, a sketch (pencils and paper are available). Fall weekends also mean concerts in the Tapestry Room. If you're named Isabella, entrance is a steal—it's free.

25 EVANS WAY, WWW.GARDNERMUSEUM.ORG

