

A Guide to Art Exhibitions in New York and Massachusetts

The weekend arts scene, offering a history of Indigenous performance and a roller coaster stashed inside a museum, has breadth and depth that is worth a trip.



By Zachary Small

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New Yorkers desiring cooler summers and fresher air have been racing upstate and to the Berkshires for generations. The buildup of smaller artist communities near the Hudson River and beyond have created a rich tapestry of cultural offerings for visitors to enjoy.

From intelligent museum exhibitions to adventurous gallery shows, there is plenty to explore, according to the longtime residents and vacationers from the art world who helped build this list of recommendations.

Art Omi: Ghent, N.Y.

“Pippa Garner: \$ELL YOUR \$ELE,” through Oct. 29.



Pippa Garner, “Untitled,” 2022-2023. via Pippa Garner and STARS Gallery, Los Angeles

Pippa Garner, 81, who trained as a car designer, has been a transgressive presence on the periphery of the art world since the '70s, creating sculptures that eroticized mass-produced objects.

Now the artist, who lives and works in Long Beach, Calif., is on the verge of a renaissance with exhibitions across the United States and the publication of a monograph this fall to examine her unique synthesis of car culture, consumerism and queer humor. The Art Omi exhibition, “\$ELL YOUR \$ELF,” surveys more than 50 years of the artist’s work, including a new custom car designed with an unprintable name, graphic tees with suggestive slogans and what the curators playfully refer to as “truck nuts.”

The artist A.K. Burns, who resides in the Hudson Valley, described the exhibition as a “must-see” for anyone interested in the octogenarian’s work.

“Mining slogany T-shirts, comics, art history and the joys of being a radical elder, Pippa is a critical observer with brilliant comedic timing,” Burns said, “addressing what is truly obscene — capitalist, sexual and cultural norms.”

Hessel Museum of Art: Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.

“Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination Since 1969,” through Nov. 26.



An installation view of “Indian Theater: Native Performance, Art, and Self-Determination since 1969” at Center for Curatorial Studies, Hessel Museum of Art, Bard College. via Center for Curatorial Studies, Hessel Museum of Art, Bard College; Photo by Olympia Shannon

The curator Candice Hopkins has united more than 100 works from Indigenous artists throughout the United States and Canada to explain the historical role that performance has played in Indigenous culture. She argues that performance has often served as a political tool for building solidarity and fostering empathy, protesting injustice and critiquing power. The survey at Bard’s Hessel Museum of Art brings viewers through the feminist movement of the 1970s to other contemporary practices with commissions from artists like Nicholas Galanin and Jeffrey Gibson. The artist Rebecca Belmore blankets the museum’s facade with symbols that question America’s history of colonialism and territorial claims.

“It is a groundbreaking overview of Native American contemporary practice,” said the gallerist Alexander Gray, who visited the exhibition earlier in its run. “Truly not to be missed.”

Mass MoCA: North Adams, Mass.

“EJ Hill: Break Run Helix,” through January 2024.



Audiences are encouraged to hop inside the single-rider cart and whiz through the curvy 260-foot track. via MASS MoCA; Photo by Kaelan Burkett

This summer, the centerpiece within the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, known as Mass MoCA, is not a painting or a giant metal sculpture, but a pink roller coaster designed by the artist EJ Hill. The installation has been on view since the fall, inviting audiences to hop inside the single-rider cart and whiz through a curvy 260-foot track. Merging delight with terror, the roller coaster is a metaphor; the artist wanted participants to experience the same lows and highs that he experiences as a queer Black man in the U.S.

“I feel like I understand bodily threat in a very real way,” Hill told The Times in a recent interview. “Every day when I leave my place the threat to my bodily existence is palpable.”

The artist is known for performances that have tested his endurance and emotions, including a 2018 installation for an exhibition at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles where he stood silent for three days on a podium overlooking turf and a fabricated racetrack — a sendup of the hypervisibility and stress that some people of color feel in elite institutions.

Beyond the exhibition, Mass MoCA has a few other shows worth exploring, including works by Carrie Schneider and Daniel Giordano.

The photographer Elle Pérez also has an exhibition called “Intimacies” at the museum, which presents an overview of the artist’s attempts to capture the vulnerability and longing between friends, lovers and strangers. Pérez has become popular within the art world, having displayed a suite of 16 photos at bus shelters across New York City for a Public Art Fund exhibition in 2019.

Thomas Cole National Historic Site: Catskill, N.Y.

“Women Reframe American Landscape,” through Oct. 29.



Ebony G. Patterson, “...the wailing...ushers us home...and there is a bellying on the land...,” 2021, mixed media on jacquard woven photo tapestry and custom vinyl wallpaper. via Thomas Cole National Historic Site; Photo by Peter Aaron/OTTO

Despite a successful career in the 1800s and early 1900s, the artist Susie Barstow never received the kind of historical glow-up that benefited male painters associated with the Hudson River School. But she had a formidable eye when it came to landscapes, illuminating the haze upon the Kaaterskill Creek and through the valleys.

The exhibition at the Thomas Cole site pulls double-duty, restoring Barstow's reputation as a pre-eminent American landscape painter while putting her in conversation with contemporary artists who also incorporate nature into their work. The roster of artists shown alongside the 19th-century painter is formidable, including critically praised artists like Ebony G. Patterson, Teresita Fernández and Wendy Red Star.

'T' Space, Rhinebeck, N.Y.

"Ann Hamilton: as after is before," through Aug. 20.



Ann Hamilton's "Side-by-Side" coats, 2018-2023. via Ann Hamilton Studio; Photo by Kathryn Clark

Weaving together words like they were art supplies, the artist Ann Hamilton has built a career somewhere between poetry, painting and sculpture. Her large-scale installations and performance collaborations are rapturous, as was her 2012 Park Avenue Armory project, "the event of a thread," and her 2018 public artwork in the World Trade Center subway station, "CHORUS."

The poet emerita of the art world, who lives in Ohio, returns to New York, turning the 'T' Space gallery into what curators describe as an "alphabetic footprint" where Hamilton uses the surrounding environment to inform the conditions of the work — made with wool coats, sheep fleece, inscribed stones, recorded sound and other materials.

Vittorio Calabrese, the director of Magazzino Italian Art, a cultural center in Philipstown, N.Y., recommended the exhibition.

"I cannot wait to go back," Calabrese said, adding that the space includes a relaxing nature reserve, architectural archive and research library.

Other Recommendations:

- A ceramics exhibition at the Russel Wright Design Center in Garrison, N.Y.
- A survey of the artist Michael Snow at The School in Kinderhook, N.Y.
- A show of the artist Edvard Munch at The Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Mass.
- By-appointment tours of the Ellsworth Kelly Foundation in Spencertown, N.Y.
- Collages by the artist Laleh Khorramian at SEPTEMBER in Kinderhook, N.Y.

Zachary Small is a reporter who covers the dynamics of power and privilege in the art world. They have written for The Times since 2019. More about Zachary Small

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