

SUMMER ARTS PREVIEW

New England's 10 hottest museum shows for summer

By [Murray Whyte](#) Globe Staff, Updated May 21, 2021, 10:00 a.m.



"The Rape of Europa" will be reunited with Titian's other five "poesie" paintings this summer at the Gardner Museum. THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

JAMES TURRELL: C.A.V.U. "I can make the sky any color you choose," Turrell once said, and he's spent much of his career proving that out. For decades, Turrell has been building Skyspace installations all over the world to frame the very sky as meditations on the complex, mutable beauty of light itself. C.A.V.U., built on the Mass MoCA campus, is his largest yet, occupying a decommissioned concrete water tank measuring 40 feet high

and 40 feet round. *Opens May 29. Mass MoCA, North Adams. 413-662-2111, www.massmoca.org*

IN AMERICAN WATERS In American art, few motifs transcend the boundaries of era, practice, culture, and history like the perpetual indifference of the sea. A byway of global commerce and colonialism, a dividing line between old and new world, and a well of dark mystery, the inscrutability of oceans has always and continues to generate powerful work by a gamut of artists. A brief roll call for this exhibition bears that out: Georgia O’Keeffe, Amy Sherald, Norman Rockwell, Hale Woodruff, Paul Cadmus, Thomas Hart Benton, Jacob Lawrence, Valerie Hegarty, and Stuart Davis. *May 29-Oct. 3. Peabody Essex Museum, Salem. 978-745-9500, www.pem.org*



Fitz Henry Lane's "Southern Cross in Boston Harbor," from 1851. KATHY TARANTOLA/COURTESY PEABODY ESSEX MUSEUM

SOCIAL & SOLITARY: REFLECTIONS ON ART, ISOLATION, AND RENEWAL

You might be seeing a lot of ruminations along these lines in the months ahead, as we slowly emerge from our pandemic-imposed shells. But the Florence Griswold Museum is

an early entrant in the field, declaring that “[t]hroughout history, art has served as a vehicle for processing the complex events and emotions tied to the trials and tribulations of humanity.” Add another tribulation to the list. *June 5-Sept. 19, Florence Griswold Museum, Old Lyme, Conn. 860-434-5542, florencegriswoldmuseum.org*

DAVID DRISKELL: ICONS OF NATURE AND HISTORY The first major survey of Driskell’s paintings draws on the celebrated curator, writer, and educator’s inclusive vision that helped center the Black American experience. Co-organized with the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, this exhibition illuminates the solitary creative output of a tireless advocate for racial equity in American cultural life. *June 19-Sept. 12, Portland Museum of Art, Portland, Maine. 207-775-6148, www.portlandmuseum.org*

ADVERTISING



NIKOLAI ASTRUP: VISIONS OF NORWAY Astrup is a giant of Norwegian art, one of the country’s best-loved artists, right up there with Edvard Munch. But Astrup’s work has never much made it out of his homeland. This is his first-ever North American exhibition, despite having died almost a century ago, and seeing some of his work makes you wonder why. A dizzying blend of intense color and rapturous magical realism, Astrup’s work is ripe and ready for its American debut. *June 19-Sept. 19. Clark Art Institute, Williamstown. 413-458-2303, www.clarkart.edu*



Nikolai Astrup's "Marsh Marigold Night" woodblock, from before 1915. DAG FOSSE/BANK FOUNDATION DNB / KODE ART MUSEUMS AND COMPOSER HOMES, BERGEN

A GARDEN FOR BOSTON A garden is growing outside the Museum of Fine Arts, where, for good or ill, Cyrus Dallin's "Appeal to the Great Spirit" — a towering sculpture of a Native American of no particular tribe — has stood front and center for more than a century. All summer and fall, a crop of corn and a stand of sunflowers will crowd onto the lawn, adding layers to a stark work that has split visitors — exploitive or homage? — for decades. Ekua Holmes's "Radiant Community" will adorn the museum's east lawn, while Elizabeth James Perry's "Raven Reshapes Boston: A Native Corn Garden at the MFA" will grow to envelop the sculpture itself. Opening June 28, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

will grow to envelop the sculpture itself. *Opening June 22. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. 617-267-9300, www.mfa.org*

VIRGIL ABLOH: FIGURES OF SPEECH The first-ever museum exhibition dedicated to the American artist and designer intersects with the close but often parallel worlds of art, music, design, architecture, and fashion. The show captures this polymath, currently the artistic director of Louis Vuitton's menswear lines, at mid-career. *July 3-Sept. 26. Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston. 617-478-3100, www.icaboston.org*



Virgil Abloh's "False Façade," from 2016. VIRGIL ABLOH/COURTESY GYMNASTICS ART INSTITUTE

PAPER STORIES, LAYERED DREAMS: THE ART OF EKUA HOLMES While Holmes's "Radiant Community" runs on the MFA's east lawn, inside there's a significant survey of her vibrant collage work for an array of children's books over a long career. The Roxbury artist and activist has always been committed to Black imagery and narratives, and her illustrations from nearly 30 different books show it. Highlights include the recently released "Black Is a Rainbow Color" by Angela Joy. *July 17-Jan. 23, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. 617-267-9300, www.mfa.org*

BOB THOMPSON: THIS HOUSE IS MINE The painter's short, incandescent career left a vapor trail across the sky of American Art that glowed brightly and faded quickly. Thompson died young, not even 30, leaving behind mostly questions of what might have been. In recent years, interest has been rising in his against-the-grain bravura painting. His work centered around the grand allegories of European culture: gods and monsters, myths and legends. And they were made in the 1960s, a time when abstraction reigned. *July 20-Jan. 9. Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine. 207-859-5600, www.colby.edu/museum*



Bob Thompson's "Blue Madonna," from 1961. THE DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ARTS, USA / BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

TITIAN: WOMEN, MYTH AND POWER After a protracted jaunt across the pond, “The Rape of Europa” is coming home, and it’s bringing friends. The Gardner Museum’s keystone masterwork, the last of Titian’s “poesie” paintings, was made for King Philip II

...of Spain in the mid-16th century. The painting has been on tour — to the National Gallery in London and the Museo del Prado in Madrid — with its five poesie compatriots for more than two years, a protracted absence due to the pandemic. In August, the Gardner plays host to what's likely the event of the year for American fans of Renaissance art: the reunification of the Poesie paintings for the first time in more than 400 years. And the Gardner is the only venue on US soil to host it. *Aug. 12-Jan.2. Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston. 617-566-1401, www.isgm.org*

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