



MAINE IS FOR ART LOVERS



A

Boston gallerist, accustomed to spending summers on Cape Cod, was invited by friends to Maine. Not long into her stay, she declared, “The Cape is so over!” Not to disparage a perfectly fine Massachusetts destination, but time and again art-minded people — makers, seekers, and sellers alike — find themselves captivated by Maine, New England’s largest state. The pleasures of its natural beauty alone are an elixir. There are five dozen named mountains and five *thousand* officially registered islands to explore along its famously rocky coastline, while its rivers, lakes, and ponds, great and small, are simply uncountable. Yet so-called Vacationland offers much more.

Wherever art-minded people gather, museums, galleries, colonies, schools, and other art venues always follow. That’s what happened in Maine, starting in the late 19th century as railroads, ferries, and better highways made it easier for people to get there. Today travel goes quickly, but it would still take a lifetime to see all of Maine’s treasures, both natural and man-made. Here’s one possible list of art-centric high spots.

PORTLAND

An essential stop is the **Winslow Homer Studio**, built on a land spit called Prouts Neck, 12 miles south of Maine’s largest city, Portland (population



66,000). Guided tours of the two-story clapboard house where Homer (1836-1910) lived and painted for a quarter century are made possible by its owner-restorer, **Portland Museum of Art**. With tickets in hand — secured well in advance, please — visitors take a van from the museum in groups limited to 10 in deference to both the structure's modest size and its neighbors.

To stand in Homer's living room, equipped for open-hearth cooking, is to imagine his daily rituals. Ascending to his second-floor painting room and stepping onto his "piazza" (deck), one sees the dramatic Atlantic views he surveyed as he worked. Outdoors, retrace his steps along the cliff walk, where he watched waves exploding against rock ledges, then went home to paint masterpieces like *Weatherbeaten*.

Deep holdings that span Homer's whole career, along with works by canonical artists with or without Maine connections — from Fitz Henry Lane and Frederic E. Church to George Bellows and Edward Hopper — are viewable back at the Portland Museum of Art. Henry Nichols Cobb of **I. M. Pei & Partners** designed the museum's brick Charles Shipman Payson Building, completed in 1983. At its entrance, installed just last year, is an eight-foot-tall, 3,000-lb. steel sculpture that perfectly combines form with function. It is *Seven* by Robert Indiana (b. 1928), who lives off the coast of Rockland on the island of Vinalhaven. From his series *NUMBERS ONE through ZERO*, *Seven* is both an address designation — 7 Congress Square — and an invitation to contemplate the numeral's connotations. Coming this autumn (October 8

-December 31) is the museum's Biennial, the ninth of its kind showcasing new or recent work by Maine's living artists.

If you time it right, you could be in Portland for **First Friday Art Walk**, a monthly open house evening at multiple galleries, studios, and alternative art venues. Participants often include **A Fine Thing: Edward T. Pollack Fine Arts, Greenhut Galleries, Roux & Cyr International Fine Art Gallery**, and **Maine College of Art**. For a schedule of other Art Walk evenings from Bangor to Wiscasset, see artwalkmaine.org.

Portland is also home to the notable **Tom Veilleux Gallery** (by appointment only) and the art auction house **Baridoff Galleries**, whose sales occur in April and October. **The Art Gallery at the University of New England's** Portland campus is



another sure bet. On view there through July 19 is a retrospective of John Calvin Stevens (1855-1940), who was associated with the Brush'uns — plein air painters who found their inspiration at Cape Elizabeth, Capisic, Stroudwater, and the Casco Bay Islands.

ROCKLAND

Even before the **Farnsworth Art Museum** opened in 1948, it had acquired a painting by a little-known 21-year-old realist who summered in Port Clyde: Andrew Wyeth (1917-2009). Today its campus has four buildings, including the Wyeth Center, where exhibitions, research, and special projects focus on three generations of the family. Beside Andrew, they are his father, Newell Convers Wyeth (1882-1945), and his son James (“Jamie”) Wyeth (b. 1946); the last lives in a restored lighthouse at the mouth of Tenants Harbor, and also a property on Monhegan Island formerly owned by the mother of the artist Rockwell Kent (1882-1971). Jamie’s big, bad, black-painted launch can often be spotted speeding between these homes.

The Farnsworth’s main building, 16 Museum Street, houses a collection of major works by other artists related to Maine. *The American Farmer* is a circa-1870 oil on panel by Eastman Johnson (1824-1906), who grew up in Fryeburg and Augusta. *Prospect Ice Flow* is a sizable 1976 oil by Neil Welliver (1929-2005), who lived in Lincolnville. *Rudy* is a 1980 oil portrait by Welliver’s neighbor Brooklyn-born Alex Katz (b. 1927), who has, every summer since 1954, lived and worked in Maine.

Committed to supporting living artists, the Alex Katz Foundation has provided significant funds to Maine museums to enhance their holdings by contemporary artists; indeed, paintings by Janet Fish (b. 1938) and Jennifer Bartlett (b. 1941) have entered the Farnsworth’s collection in that way. Incidentally, Katz’s sitter Rudy was the photographer-filmmaker-painter Rudy Burckhardt (1914-1999), who forged his own decades-long connections to Maine.

The museum’s other properties are Farnsworth Homestead and Olson House. The former, an 1850 Greek Revival residence, was home to the institution’s namesake, William A. Farnsworth (1815-1876), who made a fortune in lime and founded Rockland’s water company. The latter, a weathered clapboard structure in Cushing (12 miles southeast of Rockland), is unremarkable except that Andrew Wyeth repeatedly depicted it and its occupants — Christina Olson and her brother Alvaro. His nearly 300 drawings and paintings include his most recognizable (and over-exposed) work, *Christina’s World*, on regular view at New York City’s Museum of Modern Art.

Don’t leave Rockland, a town rightly described as “art-crazy,” without sampling its more than 20 galleries. Among the most prominent is **Dowling Walsh Gallery**, which represents, among others, two stellar realists who happen to live in Belfast, Maine. Linden Frederick (b. 1953), whose works are owned by the Farnsworth and Portland museums, will have a solo show hanging in July. At 16, Eric Green (b. 1956) won a scholarship to the

Rhode Island School of Design, but he left after a week and considers himself self-taught. Last year, Dowling Walsh showed his series *Time Diptychs*. A new show is slated for this August.

At **Carver Hill Gallery**, fantastical portraits by Jennifer Knaus (b. 1962) and depictions of rare-breed animals by Adriance DeGroff (b. 1960) are on tap this summer. You’ll also want to visit **Caldbeck Gallery**, if only to see works by Lois Dodd (b. 1927), who has divided her time between New York and Maine since 1951. In addition, **Gleason Fine Art** hangs a little of its inventory at the Captain Lindsey House Inn in Rockland; its main gallery is in Boothbay Harbor.

COLLEGE TOWNS

University museums must balance the needs of two constituencies: students and everyone else. Both Brunswick’s **Bowdoin College Museum of Art** and Waterville’s **Colby College Museum of Art** beautifully combine these dual roles: teaching institution and community gathering spot.

Founded in 1811, Bowdoin holds America’s earliest collegiate collection of European paintings, drawings, and prints, and is the only public collection in Maine today whose scope is truly global. Housed in a landmark building designed in 1894 by Charles Follen McKim (1847-1909) and renovated in 2005-07 by Machado and Silvetti Associates, the museum displays excellent examples of antiquities, paintings, sculpture, and other art forms, all the way up to video. “We think of it as a mini-Metropolitan,” says co-director Frank

(TOP LEFT) **LINDEN FREDERICK** (b. 1953), *Fortunes*, 2007, oil on panel, 12 1/4 x 12 1/4 in., on view at Dowling Walsh Gallery, Rockland, July 3-31 ■ (TOP RIGHT) **JAMIE WYETH** (b. 1946), *Study for Lighthouse*, 2003, combined mediums on board, 18 x 24 in. Haynes Galleries, Thomaston ■ (OPPOSITE PAGE) **PAUL MANSHIP** (1885-1966), *The Flight of Night*, 1916, bronze, 27 1/2 in. x 28 1/2 in. x 13 in., Colby College Museum of Art, on view at Bowdoin College Museum of Art through October 18 in *Night Vision*





H. Goodyear III. (In certain rooms, it's also a mini-MoMA.) Here, too, are shows organized by student curators. On a recent Saturday, while the baroque ensemble Rebel played a concert largely for locals in one gallery, a student-curated exhibition of African-American art and literature made since the Harlem Renaissance hung in another.

On view at Bowdoin through October 18 is the highly original exhibition *Night Vision: Nocturnes in American Art, 1860-1960*. Featuring 90 works lent by institutions nationwide, this is the first major museum survey dedicated to American artists' depictions of night, beginning just before the creation of the first commercially practical incandescent lightbulb (1879).

Founded in 1959, the Colby College Museum of Art is now Maine's largest public art institution, thanks to the 26,000-square-foot Alford-Lunder Family Pavilion, designed by Frederick Fisher and Partners and completed in 2013. Four years earlier, the museum received its largest gift, from Colby alumnus Peter H. Lunder and his wife, Paula. It consists of almost 500 mostly American paintings, sculptures, and other works from the 19th century onward, valued at more than \$100 million. Among them is a concentration of works depicting the American West and a trove of James McNeill Whistler's paintings, watercolors, pastels, etchings, and lithographs. On view here from July 11 through October 18 is the exhibition *Brand-New & Terrific: Alex Katz in the 1950s*, which features 65 of the artist's paintings, cutouts, and collages.

Just 10 minutes from Colby is **James D. Julia**. The auction house's annual three-day extravaganza is scheduled for August 26-28. It's typically the largest auction held in New England each summer, selling \$3 million to \$5 million worth of paintings, furniture, textiles, ceramics, and other antiques and decorative arts. And in case you're up for a double-header, **Thomaston Place Auction Galleries** in Thomaston will host its two-day sale August 29-30.

ART COLONIES

Several towns in Maine have historically attracted painters, their families, and students. Ogunquit is the former fishing village where Charles Herbert Woodbury (1864-1940) founded the Ogunquit Summer School of Drawing and Painting in 1898, and where successors ran schools for decades. Highlights of their achievements can be enjoyed at the small but exquisite **Ogunquit Museum of American Art**. Established in 1946, the **Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture**, whose graduates include Katz, Indiana, Fish, David Driskell, and Ellsworth Kelly, continues to offer an intensive nine-week summer residency.

Yet no Maine artistic gathering spot will ever be as authentic, or as unspoiled, as Monhegan Island. Not quite one square mile, it is accessible only by ferry from Boothby Harbor, New Harbor, and Port Clyde. (Port Clyde is home, incidentally, to **Blue Water Fine Arts**, which handles paintings,

watercolors, drawings, and prints made by its proprietor Barbara Ernst Prey.)

Rustic doesn't begin to describe this beloved speck in the ocean. No visitor vehicles are allowed — that's a given — but not even bikes are permissible. (A few commercial jalopy-pickup trucks are the only things on wheels.) It would be rough going for cyclists, anyway: eighty percent of Monhegan is undeveloped — so-called Wild Lands, crisscrossed by miles of public trails through old forest and along rugged coastal cliffs. The circa 1907 **Island Inn**, a wooden, four-story survival, is the island's largest building and grandest accommodation. Despite its shared baths (for some) and lack of air conditioning (for all), the inn has been described by at least one artist as "Monhegan's Ritz-Carlton," compared to the studio-lodging he normally rents.

Up on Light House Hill Road stands the superb **Monhegan Museum of Art & History**, housed in the Monhegan Light Station since 1968. Every year this institution presents a Monhegan-themed exhibition, and this year's features paintings and drawings by Georgia-born Lamar Dodd (1909-1996), who summered here for almost 50 years. Highlights from the permanent collection include Kent's *The D.T. Sheridan*, a circa-1950 oil of a shipwreck on the rocks of Lobster Cove that can still be glimpsed as a rusty hulk. (A larger *Sheridan* by Kent, depicted in winter, is owned by the Portland Museum of Art.) Another Monhegan standout is *Daniel Stevens* by Kent's cousin **Alice Kent Stoddard** (1883-1976); this is an oil portrait of the old salt who from 1902 to 1919 served as Monhegan's lighthouse keeper. A third star attraction is *Cutting Ice, Monhegan Island*, a 1946 oil by Andrew Winter (1893-1958), whose subject, an ice house, is gone; its ice pond is now used only by gulls to clean themselves, though it's ringed by an unmarked hiking path known to locals.

Hiking around the island has become more informative thanks to Sally Babylon's handy, pocket-sized book, *The Golden Age of Plein Air Painting on Monhegan: A Walking Guide to the Sites Where the Artists Painted*. Please don't disturb the artists at their easels, but do visit them during their posted open-studio hours. Or stop in at **Lupine Gallery**, which represents more than 50 contemporary Monhegan artists, as well as such forerunners as James Fitzgerald (1899-1971). Up on Horn Hill, his shingled home and studio were designed and built by Kent for his own use. Fitzgerald bought the buildings in the 1950s; after his death, they passed to his patrons, Anne and Edgar Hubert, who bequeathed them to the Monhegan Museum. Now open for tours on a limited basis, the house retains some Kent furnishings — his square piano, writing desk, rocking chair, wingback sofa, and clock — while the studio is hung with Fitzgerald works from the museum's collection.

Leaving on the ferry, watch for Monhegan Island Dock Jumpers, the youthful residents and

visitors who like to leap from the pier to wish you farewell. Note, too, the most seasoned ferry riders, who throw flowers into the water — their assurance that, just as the flowers float back to shore, they too shall return.

U.S. ROUTE 1

It's a shock to return to the mainland, especially if you're traveling down infamous U.S. Route 1. Luckily, art oases await. **Haynes Galleries** is a seasonal venue, open in Thomaston from June through September, after which proprietor Gary Haynes transfers to his other site in Nashville. In Freeport, bypass the L.L. Bean Outlet in favor of **Frost Gully Gallery**. Founded in 1966, it lays claim to being first in the state to show William Zorach, Leonard Baskin, and other primary Maine painters. Continue to Falmouth's **Elizabeth Moss Galleries**, established by Moss, formerly of Washington, D.C., after she fell for Maine during a summer excursion to — where else? — Monhegan. Finally, take in Saco's **Dyer Library and Museum**, known for paintings from the Saco River region and its premier collection of portraits by the renowned deaf folk artist John Brewster, Jr. (1766-1854).

THE MAINE ART MUSEUM TRAIL

If you have time to see only one Maine art venue, don't worry: selections from Colby, Bowdoin, Monhegan, and Farnsworth, as well as three other public collections, are on loan to the Portland Museum of Art this summer (right through September 20) in the exhibition *Directors' Cut: Selections from the Maine Art Museum Trail*. Works by Lewiston-born Marsden Hartley (1877-1943), who late in his peripatetic life declared himself "the painter from Maine," have been loaned by Colby, Ogunquit, and Lewiston's own **Bates College Museum of Art**. In addition, Bangor's **University of Maine Museum of Art** has lent photographs by Berenice Abbott (1898-1991). And from Bowdoin have come Homer artifacts that will give your historical imagination a genuine thrill: some of his watercolor brushes, two of his palettes, and even his canteen, fishing net, and knapsack.

A place whose artistic A-to-Z runs from Homer to Katz must be a welcoming place. "It seems there are more artists per capita here than anywhere else," a Maine-based artist friend wrote in an e-mail. Nonetheless, it was a lament. "I love the land dearly, but the art scene is tough," she said. This competitive milieu is challenging for art makers to be sure, but it can spur them to do their best — and art seekers reap the benefits. Then there are the other reasons everyone loves Maine: lobster rolls and wild blueberry pie!

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(OPPOSITE TOP) BARBARA ERNST PREY (b. 1957), *Fibonacci's Workshop*, 2014, watercolor on paper, 28 x 40 in., on view July 18- August 31 at Blue Water Fine Arts, Port Clyde ■ (OPPOSITE BOTTOM) ROCKWELL KENT (1882-1971), *Wreck of the D.T. Sheridan*, 1949-1953, tempera on canvas, 27 3/8 x 43 7/8 in., Portland Museum of Art, Maine. Bequest of Elizabeth B. Noyce, 1996.38.25