

# Summer visual arts: Feel like exploring? Now's the time ... and the place

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The Littlefield Gallery in Winter Harbor represents many strong Maine artists like Roy Germon, Joe Haroutunian and Fred Lynch. But because Winter Harbor is a three-hour drive from Portland, it's not a casual trek. What makes it worth the effort is its proximity to Schoodic Point – one of the most beautiful places in America and one of the most exciting landscapes to explore in Maine. My family has spent many August hours bounding about on acres of wave-sculpted rocks and exploring the islands and paths of the area.

Now imagine an August slog around the galleries of New York City: 10 million sweaty people in a frowzy metropolis. Hancock County only has 50,000 people, so at times you can even have Schoodic Point all to yourself.

If you want to travel out of state, get your family to Boston and the Isabella Stewart Gardiner Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts, the Institute of Contemporary Art or the very worthy new Harvard Art Museums that consolidates all three of the university's major museums under a Renzo Piano-designed roof.

Portland's galleries and museums offer a nice art-filled day but the city has competition even within Maine in terms of art. Maine's largest art museum, after all, is the [Colby College Museum of Art](#) in Waterville. And it's not only big (about the size of Harvard's new consolidated facility), but it also has one of the best collections of American art in the country.

Colby alone is a significant art destination, but if you're feeling like Frankenstein on a rainy day, or simply in the mood for a full serving of Victorian gothic, make your way to the [L.C. Bates Museum](#) in Hinckley. It is a bona fide, intact Victorian museum with some of the most fascinatingly wacky and wonderful displays in New England – the murals in the dioramas alone are worth the trip.

While there are many excellent art venues inland, such as the [Owen Gallery at Gould Academy](#) in outdoorsy Bethel, the [Harlow Gallery](#) in charming Hallowell and the University of Maine Museum of Art in recently re-polished downtown Bangor among so many others, the entire Maine coast is dotted with unexpectedly rich art communities such as Kennebunk, Belfast, Stonington, Damariscotta, Blue Hill, Camden, Bar Harbor and Boothbay, to name just a few.

Brunswick is a most worthy stop on the drive Down East. The Charles McKim-designed [Bowdoin College Museum of Art](#) one of America's most beautiful museum buildings. If you want strong traditional painting, you can find it at [Bayview Gallery](#), or if you want to see the best of abstract art in Maine, it's inevitably on view at ICON Contemporary Art (725-8157).

With more than 20 galleries and the [Farnsworth Art Museum](#), Rockland is the solid center of Maine's gallery scene. Leading the way are the formidable [Dowling Walsh Gallery](#), the sophisticated [Caldbeck Gallery](#) and the sparky [Asymmetrick Arts](#).

One gallery I try not to miss on my visits to Rockland is the South Thomaston satellite of the Nashville-based [Haynes Galleries](#). Haynes joins Dowling Walsh as the most ambitious high-focus realism painting galleries in Maine. And it is fitting and convenient that these galleries are both so close to the Wyeth-oriented Farnsworth.

My favorite art day trip of 2014 featured stops at the Ogunquit Museum of American Art, the always excellent [George Marshall Store Gallery](#) in York, the scrappy [Buoy Gallery](#) in Kittery and Maine's most impressively elegant contemporary art venue, the [Corey Daniels Gallery](#) in Wells.

My sons' favorite Maine gallery to visit is Courthouse Gallery in Ellsworth. But family favorites also include [Gleason Fine Art in Boothbay](#), the Monhegan-strong [Elizabeth Moss Galleries](#) in Falmouth, [Turtle Gallery](#) on Deer Isle and the busy-but-impressive [Stable Galley](#) in Damariscotta.

Last year's summer travels also carried me to excellent out-of-state galleries, most

memorably the incomparably impressive Morrison Gallery in Kent, Connecticut, and the gorgeously situated West Branch Gallery in Stowe, Vermont.

My most pleasant surprise of 2015 was finding the work of one of New Hampshire's most exciting contemporary artists, Carly Glovinski, in Portsmouth at Nahcotta – a design-oriented shop with gallery space in the back. This year, Glovinski headlined the formidable inaugural show at Portsmouth's 3S Artspace. Portsmouth is a charming little gallery town. One of my favorite places to take the family is the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in Cornish, New Hampshire – 25 gorgeous acres with hundreds of works by America's greatest sculptor.

My family's summer travel plans also include things like free concerts at L.L. Bean – and therefore visits to Frost Gully Gallery in Freeport, and dance performances at Bates College, which also has a great art museum. We're camping at Katahdin, so we'll visit the excellent North Light Gallery in Millinocket. Another camping trip to an upstate New York music festival will bring us to Vermont's tremendous Shelburne Museum – which my boys love.

You don't have to suffer the mephitic streets and subways of New York this summer to satisfy your hunger for visual culture: There is plenty of excellent art all around New England – and it can be either the main fare or simply the dessert. For example:

**Joseph Haroutunian: Horizons, Littlefield Gallery, 145 Main St, Winter Harbor.** June 29 to July 26. Haroutunian is an impressively abstract painter, and his savvy vision is a great reminder that Maine's gritty inspiration isn't limited to scenic appeal.

**Leonardo da Vinci and Idea of Beauty, Museum of Fine Arts, 465 Huntington Ave, Boston.** Through June 14. Thirty works by Leonardo joined by the likes of Michelangelo while surrounded by the massive, deep and worldly collection of the MFA – and most Americans have never seen even one actual work by our culture's most revered genius.

**Seasonal Scenes: The Beauty of Rural Maine, L.C. Bates Museum, Route 201, Hinckley.** Through Sept. 10. The museum alone is one of New England's most fascinating cultural institutions, but with a show about rural Maine featuring art giants like Lois Dodd and emerging contemporary talents like Shoshannah White, you can expect a full load of uniquely worthy quirk.

**Alfred Chadbourn: Painting in Maine, Ogunquit Museum of American Art, 543 Shore Road.** July 2 to August 30. Underneath the exciting appeal of Chadbourn's paintings was a sophisticated artist with a rigorous method. Educated in Paris and California, the late Chadbourn was an important teacher in Maine. This exhibition is very likely to launch a posthumous reconsideration of Chadbourn's influence and importance.

**Henry Isaacs and others, Gleason Fine Art, 31 Townsend Ave., Boothbay Harbor.** Henry Isaacs is one of Maine's best colorists and most appealing painters. At Gleason, he is

surrounded by talented artists: Philip Frey, Bill Irvine, Kevin Beers, Jessica Ives, Michael Vermette and others.

**Frost Gully Gallery Artists, Frost Gully Gallery, 1159 U.S. Route 1, Freeport.** Maine's oldest year-round professional gallery, Frost Gully is owned and operated by Thomas Crotty – one of the state's most impressive landscape painters. In Maine, there's nothing like the old school: Dahlov Ipcar, Laurence Sisson, Janice Anthony, William Kienbusch, John Laurent and more.

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