

An Insider's Guide to

ART IN NEW YORK CITY

Rebecca Arkenberg

Whether you are coming to New York City in March for the National Art Education Association Convention, or just coming on your own, there are plenty of gems for an art lover to find here.

The National Museum of the American Indian

The National Museum of the American Indian (The George Gustav Heye Center at the Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House, One Bowling Green), recently opened the Diker Pavilion for Native Arts and Cultures. The inaugural exhibition is *Beauty Surrounds Us*, featuring seventy-seven works from the museum's collection, including Quechua and Seminole dance outfits, a Navajo saddle blanket, a Northwest Coast carved chief's staff, a conch shell trumpet from Mexico, and an Inupiaq (Eskimo) ivory cribbage board. The Museum's Web site is www.nmai.si.edu; click on the New York location for more information on events and programs.

The Rubin Museum

The Rubin Museum (150 West 17th Street) opened in October 2004. It is the first museum in the Western World dedicated to the art of the Himalayas, including paintings, sculptures, textiles, and ritual objects spanning the second century to the twentieth century. In March you can see *Mongolia: Beyond Chinggis Khan*, an exhibition that

celebrates the 800th anniversary of the founding of the Mongol empire. The museum has a café and a shop as well. For more information, go to www.rmanyc.org/home.cfm.

The Morgan Library & Museum

In 2006, the Morgan Library and Museum (225 Madison Avenue) reopened in a newly enlarged campus designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Renzo Piano. A soaring glass and steel central court now unites the three historical buildings, and a performance hall, café, shop, and reading room have been added. The Morgan houses one of the world's greatest collections of artistic, literary, musical, and historical works, including three Gutenberg Bibles. The Morgan's Web site at www.themorgan.org provides information on special exhibitions.

Tom Otterness Sculptures

Art can be found everywhere in New York. Visit the subway stations, restaurants, bars, parks, and boulevards. Walk along Broadway from Columbus Circle to 168th Street and see if you can find all the Tom Otterness sculptures, part of a 2005 exhibition (download the map at www.tomotterness.net/exhibitions_broadway.html) or experience Otterness's *Life Underground* (2004) at the 14th Street and 8th Avenue subway station, where his round little people go about their daily lives in the nooks and crannies.

Artist Hangouts

To channel the Abstract Expressionists, find Cedar Tavern, originally on University Place between 8th and 9th streets, the favorite haunt of Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Mark Rothko, Franz Kline, and Robert Motherwell. In the 1940s and '50s they drank, fought, and presumably discussed art within its doors, and Jackson Pollock once was banned for ripping the men's room door from its hinges. Cedar Tavern's successor, at 82 University Place, between 11th and 12th streets, has cultivated the same bohemian atmosphere, but unfortunately, it is closing indefinitely. Check the Web to see if it has re-opened by March.

Carlyle Hotel

Bemelmans Bar in the Carlyle Hotel (35 E. 76th St. at Madison Ave.) devotes a whole wall to Central Park with a whimsical mural by the creator of the Madeline children's book series, Ludwig Bemelmans. This is the only surviving Bemelmans commission on view to the public. Look for Madeline and her classmates, as well as other Bemelmans characters. Visiting Bemelmans Bar is an Upper East Side experience, with piano jazz, white-coated waiters, and expensive but fabulous cocktails. Visit before 9:00 p.m. to avoid the cover charge. ☹

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