



MARYHILL MUSEUM OF ART
FEATURES A NATIVE PLANT GARDEN

THE ROAD SHOWS

Lesser-known museums are worth the trip BY SOPHIA JUNE

Instead of scouring national park gift shops on your next vacation, try wandering into a small-town art museum. Local Eugene painter Jon Jay Cruson has stumbled upon several museums during his frequent jaunts through the Oregon and Washington countryside searching for images for his works. Check out his suggestions for hidden Northwest museum treasures.

Trip #1: Salem and Philomath

TRAVEL TIME: Eugene to Salem: 1 hour; Salem to Philomath: 53 minutes; Philomath to Eugene: 1 hour.

TOTAL ROUND TRIP TRAVEL TIME ACCORDING TO GOOGLE MAPS: About three hours

TOTAL MUSEUM TIME: Depends on your love of art

Hallie Ford Museum of Art

700 State St., Salem. Open Tuesday through Saturday 10 am - 5 pm and Sunday 1 pm - 5 pm, \$6 general admission.

Willamette University's art museum is the third largest in Oregon and boasts a collection of more than 6,000 works of art. Currently on view is a collection of 30 prints from painter and ornithologist John James Audubon's *The Birds of America*. "It's an excellent small museum," Cruson says, "one of the finest museums in the state." He also recommends walking across the street to view the art in the state Capitol, where attendees can wander the building's extensive art collection. "You can spend half a day wandering around," he says. But be warned: The self-guided tour may require knocking on some private office doors.

Benton County Historical Society and Museum

1101 Main St., Philomath. Open Tuesday - Saturday 10 am - 4:30 pm, free admission.

This museum ranks among Cruson's favorites. Located inside the historic Philomath College building (built in 1867), the museum displays art, artifacts and photographs as well as historical paperwork. "We have 127,000 objects in our collection," says Irene Zenev, who's been the museum's director since 2007. "They're *all* cool things." Currently on display is a collection of 19th- and 20th-century tools and an exhibit of paper art by Japanese artist Yuji Hiratsuka. On Oct. 17, a collection of art from local Philomath artists will be on display.

Trip #2: Columbia River Gorge

TRAVEL TIME: Eugene to Stevenson, Washington: 2 hours and 30 minutes; Stevenson to Goldendale: 1 hour and 18 minutes; Goldendale to Eugene: 3 hours and 30 minutes.

TOTAL TRAVEL TIME: A little over seven hours. Consider staying the night on one of the Columbia Gorge's many hotels and B&Bs or even camping when the weather is nice.

Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center

990 SW Rock Creek Dr., Stevenson, Washington. Open 9 am - 5 pm every day, \$10 general admission.

Located just across the Columbia River from Oregon, this museum is dedicated to the history of the Columbia Gorge, which dates back 40 million years. "We also have the largest Columbia Basin publicly displayed privately owned artifact collection," says director David Peterson, who's been with the museum for 19 years. Look for the First People's exhibit, which focuses on the Cascade Chinook, the first people to live in the area. The center also has the world's largest Catholic rosary collection. Besides historical exhibits, the center houses an art gallery, which showcases and sells the work of local artists. Currently, the gallery features oil and watercolor paintings, as well as metal art.

Maryhill Museum of Art

35 Maryhill Museum of Art Drive, Goldendale, Washington. Open 10 am - 5 pm every day March 15-Nov. 15, \$9 general admission.

Like the interpretive center, Maryhill is located on the other side of the river, high on the steep-sided gorge, providing views guaranteed to rival any work of art in the museum itself. In addition to paintings, the museum has a collection of American Indian artifacts, international chess sets, glass art and even a fashion exhibit showcasing French clothing from the mid-1940s. Cruson recommends Maryhill for sculpture fans as the museum has a large collection of Northwest artists' works. Currently on display is a collection of African art, as well as a collection of comic art by *New Yorker* cartoonists. ■



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