

# FOCUS ON PORTLAND, ME



Above: Outside view of the ICA at Maine College of Art, looking in at an opening. Courtesy of Maine College of Art.

**P**ortland, Maine. Yes. Life's good here.—A bold and fitting slogan coming from the proud city of Portland. It's based on the title of an essay written by gay rights pioneer John Preston, a Massachusetts native explaining why he chose to live in Portland instead of New York. It's easy to see what he's talking about, considering the stack of accolades Portland has rallied up over the years: #1 Base for Day Trips, *Travel+Leisure* (2011), #1 Most Livable City, *Forbes* (2009), Best Town in the East, *Outside Magazine* (2010). It's widely

acclaimed as one of the best places to eat in the Northeast, if not the best, and offers more restaurants per capita than New York City. That's one restaurant for every 118 people. Maine's largest city may be no bigger than a bite of the Big Apple, but it packs a powerful punch.

The old port city, stewed in history and simmering with a vibrant art scene, is where the established and the up-and-coming collide and collaborate. This is a city on the fringe with a funky vibe, unafraid to show off its creative, energetic side. On the first Friday eve-

ning of every month, sidewalks are stocked with street artists, artisans, dancers and musicians for the **Portland Art Walk**. As many as 3,000 people from Maine, New England and beyond flock to Portland, eager to participate in a beloved cultural tradition that keeps true to the independent spirit of the art-inspired community. With winter under way, bundle up in your scarf and boots and set out to explore more than 60 participating art galleries, studios, museums and alternative art venues throughout the city, centered primarily in



the Arts District of downtown Portland.

While you're out and about, head over to Portland's West End to warm up with a cup of locally-roasted, organic Carpe Diem coffee at **Aurora Provisions** on Pine Street. Aurora is Portland's one-stop gourmet destination—a café, caterer, bakery, market and wine shop all under one roof—and a promising pit stop for holiday shopping. Find eclectic gifts, artisanal breads and cheeses, fine wines and gift baskets. The Christmas gourmet take-out menu offers delights such as chocolate peppermint cupcakes and bourbon walnut pie, and breakfast and lunch menus are packed with scones and muffins, soups and sandwiches made with seasonal products fresh from farmer's markets. Try the turkey and cranberry sandwich piled high with house roasted turkey breast and cranberry-port relish for an extra taste of Thanksgiving.

If you passed on a purchase from the bakery case on your way out, you'll have a second chance to snag that brownie you were eyeing at the PMA Café by Aurora Provisions at the **Portland Museum of Art**. Standing as a cornerstone of the Arts District since 1892, the permanent collection of the Portland Museum of Art includes more than 17,000 fine and decorative works dating from the 18th century to the present. The *2013 Portland Museum of Art Biennial: Piece Work* creates a visual record of Maine's evolving contemporary art scene. Many of the artists in *Piece Work* live in Maine for all or part of the year. For others, Maine has become a significant part of their lives and craft. The art spans a broad range of media connected by the artists' use of repetition, handcraft, and translation. Artist Lauren Fensterstock assembles individually cut blades of paper grass to create a dark, ornamental

**PORTLAND, ME**

garden, while Julie K. Gray arranges thousands of tiny plastic beads into intricate, geometric patterns. Through January 5, 2014, *Piece Work* will feature 70 works, its installation extending beyond the main exhibition gallery to envelop the McLellan House, corridors and sculpture garden.

Heading along Congress Street, stop in and say hello to June at the **June Fitzpatrick Gallery**, an independently operated art space housed within the Maine College of Art (MECA). Since its inception in 1992, it has been critically acclaimed as a leader in Maine's contemporary art arena. The gallery supports a substantial portfolio selection of unframed drawings, prints, and other works on paper, and monthly exhibitions feature drawings and prints, paintings and sculpture by both estab-

**art.** the soul of any space.

LeeAnne Mallonee, *Fallen*      Lynn Karlin, *Garlic Scapes*      Kimberly Post, *transcention*

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Jon Imber, *Marty's Cove*, oil on panel

**Holly Ready Gallery**  
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Holly Ready, *Breakthrough*, oil on canvas, 24" x 24", 2012

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## PORTLAND, ME

lished artists and selected newcomers. This November, the gallery will see *Pots*, an exhibition of exotic ceramics and clay vases from Paul Heroux and Susan Dewsnap.


At the core of the Arts District lives the **Maine College of Art** itself. Since 1882, MECA has been a premier destination for artists in pursuit of transformative learning experiences. Graduates include painter Ahmed Alsoudani, whose work appeared on the cover of *Art New England* January/February 2012. His exhibition *Redacted*—20 recent works evocative of the artist's unique and powerful vocabulary of violence, survival and history—is on view at the Portland Museum of Art through December 8. The Institute of Contemporary Art at MECA is an art space on campus featuring cutting edge exhibitions and public programs that showcase new perspectives

and trends in contemporary art. In addition to *We Are What We Hide*—an exhibition revealing works hidden in the gallery walls—the ICA is showcasing the 2013 Maine College of Art Faculty Exhibition. Featured artists include Sascha Braunig (Painting), Hilary Irons (Foundation), and Samantha Haedrich (Graphic Design).

MECA alumnus and Cape Elizabeth artist Holly Ready keeps her studio/gallery, **Holly Ready Gallery**, close by on Congress. Greatly inspired by artists as diverse as J.M.W. Turner and Edward Hopper, Holly paints vibrant Maine landscapes and seascapes. "Living on the Maine seacoast, with its abstract shapes and constantly changing light and reflections provides a continuous source of inspiration," she says in her artist statement. She uses both oil and gouache to forge an impressionistic, luminous style with a strong emphasis on color.

Further along Congress, **Rose Contemporary** is a fine art gallery featuring exhibitions by artists based throughout the U.S. and beyond. The gallery was established by Virginia Sassman Rose, an active member of Portland's art scene for more than eight years, with previous roles working in fine art in New York City, New Hampshire, and other parts of Maine. *The Portland Paper Project* is an ongoing collection of works on paper stored in the flat files at Rose Contemporary. Drawings, prints, collage and photography are available for viewing during regular gallery hours.


Established in 1978 on Forest Street, **A FINE THING: Edward T Pollack Fine Arts** focuses on fine prints, drawings, photographs and books of the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. With more than 1,500 works of art in its inventory, A FINE THING has strong holdings of works by American printmakers who were part of the Social Realism movement



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Paul Heroux, *Folded Vase*, 7" x 12" x 5"

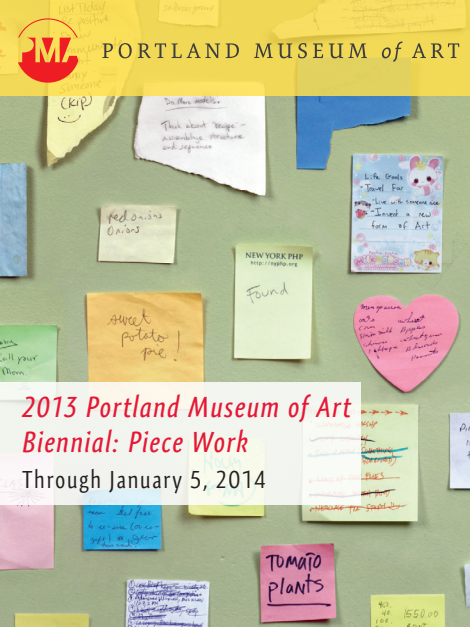
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Arthur Dove – *Oil Boat* – Watercolor

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**PORTLAND MUSEUM of ART**

**2013 Portland Museum of Art Biennial: Piece Work**  
Through January 5, 2014

**Also on view...**  
**Ahmed Alsoudani: Redacted**  
Through December 8, 2013

**Winslow Homer's Civil War**  
Through December 8, 2013

**Amy Stacey Curtis: 9 walks**  
Through January 5, 2014

Top: Adriane Herman and Brian Reeves, *Dually Noted* (detail), 2012, inkjet, 27 x 19 3/4 inches. ©Adriane Herman and Brian Reeves.  
Part of the 2013 Portland Museum of Art Biennial: Piece Work.

Seven Congress Square, Portland, Maine 04101  
(207) 775-6148 [portlandmuseum.org](http://portlandmuseum.org)





Charles Shipman Payson Building, Portland Museum of Art, view from Congress Square. Photo: Craig Becker.

and of American mid-century modernists. Periodically the gallery also features work by contemporary artists, most of whom live and work in Portland.

One of Portland's more unusual gallery concepts is **VoxPhotographs**—the voice of fine art photography in Maine. Since 2007, Director Heather Frederick has represented photo-based works created by Maine artists. Opting out of a storefront presence, VoxPhotographs uses its website and private gallery space in downtown Portland to create

an intimate viewing experience for both private and corporate collectors.

**Peregrine Press** on Pleasant Street, founded in 1991 as a non-profit, fine arts printmaking cooperative in Portland, is among only a few of its kind in the nation. Thirty active members work in a variety of printmaking techniques including collograph, woodcut, monotype, etching, lithography and screen-printing. In addition to making prints, members teach and attend workshops at the studio and participate in gallery exhibitions around the region.

## PORTLAND, ME

Moving into the Historic Old Port district, stroll along Exchange Street—the main hub of the Old Port—and into **Aucocisco Galleries**. All of the artists at Aucocisco share a significant connection to the State of Maine since Maine forms a significant part of their identity as visual artists. Gallery director Andres Verzosa takes the time to nurture up-and-coming talents and to introduce their work alongside recognized masters, and on occasion, carefully selected works from artist estates or private collections associated closely with Maine are shown and sold. November 5–23, Aucocisco will show work by Tim Clorious, Mary Hart and Vivien Russe, while December 3–21 will see Alice Spencer and Heather Perry.

Recently reopened in Old Port, **Susan Maasch Fine Art** focuses on contemporary Maine and regional mid-career artists in paintings, prints, photography and sculpture. With a strong and clear focus on contemporary photography, the gallery is one of the few in upper New England to focus each month on rotating photo shows. November and December will feature two photography exhibitions: *New Portraits* from Jack Montgomery and *The Male Nude* from Denise Froehlich; *8 Women Abstract Painters: 8x8 Paintings* also will be on view.

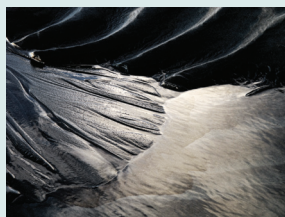
**Fore River Gallery** over on Market Street is a co-op operated by local artists Liz and Mike M. Marks, Elizabeth Prior, and T.J. McDermott. The gallery consistently shows the work of all four artists featuring jewelry, sculptures, ceramics and paintings.



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Dave Wade, *Shiny Delta*



Jane Yudelman, *February Shore #3*



Felice Boucher, *Green Pear*



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## PORTLAND, ME

Photorealist paintings shown are the creation of **Mike M. Marks**, whose landscape paintings offer dramatic views like a detailed tree line silhouetted against a brilliant sunset. Alongside Mike's paintings you'll find the entire collection of **Elizabeth Prior's** Latitude & Longitude jewelry. You choose the coordinates of any place on the planet and Elizabeth hand stamps them on a sterling silver cuff, bangle bracelet, pendant, wedding band, key ring or cuff link—a good fit for a stocking stuffer.

Around the corner, **Greenhut Galleries**, established in 1977, is the oldest gallery in Portland. As it has grown, so has the reach of its artists, whose styles span the spectrum of realism to abstraction, through landscape, still life and portraiture, to non-figurative work in both two- and three-dimensional media. The artists whom Greenhut represents—30 painters and sculptors living and working in Maine, as well as the estates of Maurice Freedman and Robert Hamilton—are a diverse group with unique visions. Monthly re-installations and opening receptions make it a lively, fresh place to visit. November 7–30 sees a solo show by painter Margaret Gerding, whose meditative

and tranquil landscape paintings are bright and infused with color, while December 5–28 welcomes an in-house group Holiday Show.

Ten minutes north of downtown, the Art Gallery on the Portland campus of the **University of New England**—sometimes called “the Little Jewel”—houses a collection of paintings, drawings, photographs and sculpture. Built in 1977, it mounts six exhibitions annually, ranging from contemporary fine art photography, international themes, to works by women and Maine artists in a variety of media. Beginning November 5, *A Graphic Designer Remembered* commemorates Joe Guertin (1949–2010), a teacher and graphic designer in the arts community of Portland from the early 1970s onward. He

served as the head of the Department of Graphic Design at MECA, and his career led him to the award winning graphic design firm, Chermayeff & Geismar. This exhibition is curated by Professor Emeritus Stephen Halpert, a friend of Guertin's, and presents photographs, drawings and designs by Guertin as well as works by the students he influenced.

Full of inspiration and innovation, Portland's art scene is booming, growing and evolving. This seacoast city is packed with one-of-a-kind ways to experience a festive holiday season adventure, from the sustenance of gourmet goodies to groundbreaking artwork and exhibitions. As 2013 comes to a close, Portland leaves us excitedly anticipating what's in store for next year.



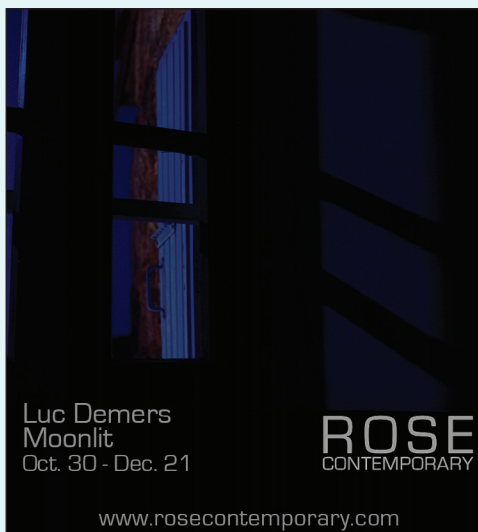
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Photograph by Joe Guertin, 1967

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