

Upcoming: Exploring New England

30 May – 6 June 2019

Art, architecture and revolutionary ideas

Our week-long visit will take us from the sweeping vistas of the Hudson Valley through the gentle beauty of rural Massachusetts to majestic Boston. Throughout the trip we will experience New England's unique blend of the progressive and the traditional in art, architecture and culture, representing the best of 'liberal' America. The itinerary falls into complementary halves. The first three days' travelling by coach through Upper New York State and Massachusetts discovering cutting-edge art and lively centres of cultural activity off the beaten track, will be balanced by a stay spanning four days in the heart of Boston, giving time to explore its boundless attractions, including world-class art collections and historic places. We have chosen high quality, boutique-style hotels with real character, both en route and in Boston itself. There we will be staying for three nights at the Godfrey, a stylish contemporary hotel within a century-old building, centrally located at Downtown Crossing.

Highlights of the first three days will include visits to the DIA Art Foundation, the well-preserved former studio of Abstract Expressionist artist Richard Pousette-Dart (subject of the Autumn Kettle's Yard exhibition), Storm King, one of America's earliest and most extensive sculpture parks, and Cedar Grove, the Catskill house and studio of the 19th century founder of the Hudson River School, Thomas Cole. Also the Clark Institute of Art, and MASS MoCA, the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, at North Adams. Like DIA, MASS MoCA has revived an abandoned factory site to create one of the largest centres for contemporary visual and performance art in America.

On our fourth day, our first visit will be to the iconoclastic Modernist house designed by the Bauhaus founder, Walter Gropius, for his family in 1938 after he had been forced to leave Germany. We will be given a private tour. The house's innovative layout, carefully placed art objects and furniture lend it a feel reminiscent of Kettle's Yard.

Concord is perhaps best known as the home of Transcendentalist writer and thinker Henry David Thoreau, whose work *Walden* is still influential today. Guided by a Thoreau scholar, we will walk around Walden Pond and see the replica of the wooden hut where he famously spent two years living in pursuit of the simple life.

In Boston we begin with an expert-led guided walk around picturesque Beacon Hill, Boston's historic quarter, with many fine examples of early American architecture. Taking the easy-to-access Metro we then go to the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, an ornate Venetian-style mansion housing a magnificent collection of world class painting, sculpture and decorative arts, ranging from Rembrandt to contemporary works. The next day we spend the morning at Boston's superlative Museum of Fine Arts, one of the world's most comprehensive art museums. Its vast collection ranges from Antiquity to Warhol. After lunch, we move on to the Institute of Contemporary Art housed in an exciting modern waterfront building echoing the design of nearby gantry cranes. After a personal introduction by the chief curator, we will see the temporary exhibitions and collections, including one of major women artists such as Cindy Sherman and Mona Hatoum. We then hope to take a boat trip to The Watershed, an outpost of the ICA in East Boston. Remaining in this vibrant former dockland area, we will end the day with a group dinner in a private dining room at The Barking Crab, a lively, authentic Boston seafood institution.

Our final day will be free to allow further exploration of Boston's countless attractions, be it museums, shops or simply enjoying its open spaces. Harvard University has the magnificent Fogg Museum and the Stirling-designed Sackler. If you have any energy left, you can consider taking an architectural river cruise or follow the Freedom Trail on foot, linking the city's key sites associated with the USA's revolutionary history.

For full details, costs and a booking form please contact the organisers **by 14 December**

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