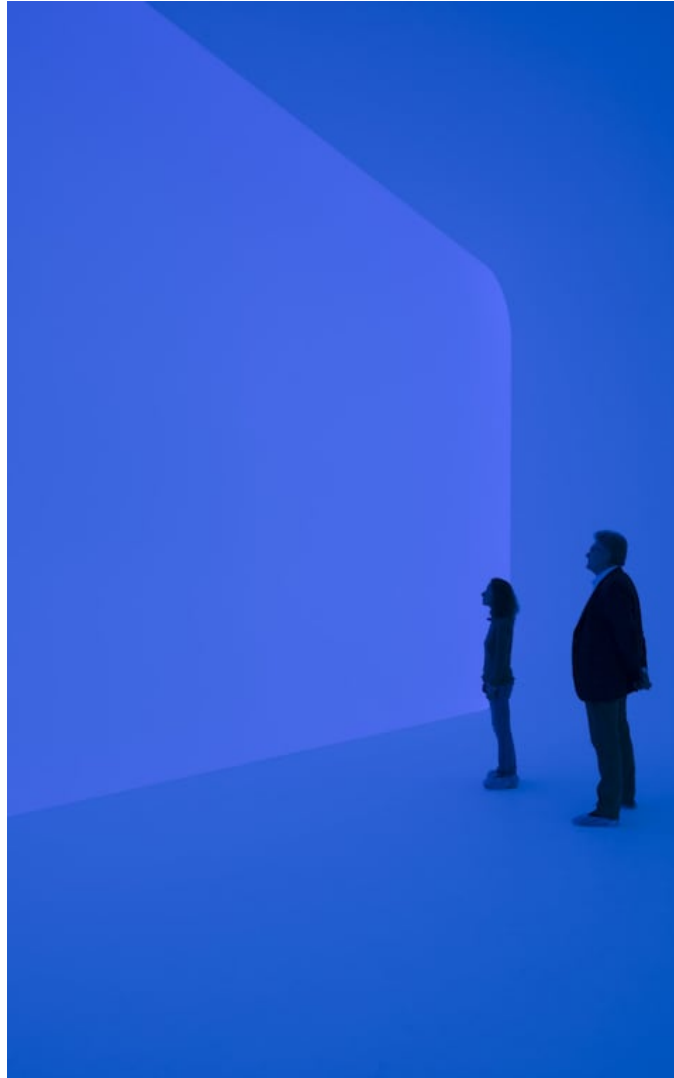


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The Telegraph

The Director's Guide: MASS MoCA, Massachusetts



James Turrell's Perfectly Clear, at MASS MoCA CREDIT: FLORIAN HOLZHERR

Among the largest contemporary art museums in America, MASS MoCA's vast, varied and continually changing collection has long drawn art and culture lovers from the world over to the small Massachusetts town of North Adams. With the site hosting a multitude of festivals and one-off events alongside holding an impressive collection of works from the likes of James Turrell and Jenny Holzer, there is invariably much to see - even if every visit is different. Here MASS MoCA direct director Joseph Thompson presents his insider guide to its most striking works and unexpected facets.

How should first-time visitors structure their visit?

MASS MoCA occupies a 16-acre site: with 22 buildings, and an intricate network of courtyards and elevated walkways, there is a lot of art to cover.

Most of our shows rotate every year - and most of our shows only appear at MASS MoCA, since we specialise in very large, often impossible-to-replicate installations. After you've covered the temporary exhibitions, visit as many of our long-term shows that you can. And here's a tip: many don't realise that MASS MoCA is as much a performing arts venue as museum, so align your trip with one of our almost weekly presentations of music, theater, dance, and film.

What should visitors ensure they see?

We always have a big roster of exciting, temporary exhibitions of new art: every year two-thirds of our galleries change. That said, our "must see" long-term installations include definitive retrospectives of the wall drawings of Sol LeWitt and the light and space installations of James Turrell.

Laurie Anderson and Jenny Holzer also have long-term dedicated spaces at MASS MoCA. With the Hall Art Foundation, we co-host a magisterial suite of Anselm Kiefer paintings and sculpture, sited within a gallery created from an abandoned one-million gallon concrete water tank.

For visitors with limited time, which rooms or exhibits should be prioritized?

Make an online reservation to see James Turrell's Perfectly Clear. But on your way to it, walk through our massive Building 5 gallery, where you will see football field-sized immersive installations by established artists, and by mid-career artists on the rise.

On the way out of Perfectly Clear - which floods your entire neuro-optical system with pure light - see Jenny Holzer's installation, based on America's interrogation policies and practices in Guantanamo, which is sobering, sometimes shattering. I'd suggest making your way back towards the lobby via our Sol LeWitt tour de force - nearly an acre of gloriously colorful wall drawings.

- John O'Ceallaigh