

Claims Department



This issue is about my trip to New York.

It is basically a travelogue, but it's also a little more than that, since it'll cover my thoughts on the things I was thinking as I was family-free, and thus up to whatever I wanted, and thus, thought a lot.

That cover up there is a shot from an exhibit at the Cooper Hewitt museum, a part of the Smithsonian. I'd never visited, and I only did the one exhibit, a look at the all-purpose miracle designer Es Devlin.

In fact, I do love New York. I've been there maybe ten times, and it's usually for museums, but this time, I also got a show! This first Broadway show I attended this century.

And it was amazing!

Comments - JohnnyEponymous@gmail.com





I got to the Ontario Airport plenty early, and shortly after I hunkered down, I saw a guy who looked exactly like Jamie Noble.

This won't mean a lot to most of you, probably not even to many wrestling fans, but he was a wrestler, a damned good one, and for the last decade or so has been one of the big time road agents for WWE.

He's fairly distinctive, but in airports, everyone looks more like someone you recognize than you'd ever imagine. I did, however, also go through security three people behind Maria Bamford, and there's NO confusing her with any other human.

So, a little bit later, I headed down to an empty gate to use a power outlet, Ontario isn't lousy with 'em like San Jose or Charlotte, where I'm currently typing this, and an airport employee walked by.

"Man, the Undertaker is over there," he said, indicating the area over by where I thought my gate was.

I'd never met the Undertaker, so I thought, why not head over, since my gate was over there.

I was likely a bit more than a little distracted, and I didn't see my gate. There was a long gap between gate 409 and 411, one that took me into what I think might have been the gates for the chartered flights.

And my gate wasn't there.

I looked around and didn't know exactly what was going on, but there were two guys sitting on a bank of chairs.

"Excuse me, but...hey...you're..."

They smiled.

"I'm pretty sure we are." The guy in the yellow hat said.

It was WWE Superstars Tyler Bate, the Big Strong Boy (in a yellow baseball hat), and The Bruiserweight, Pete Dunne. Right now, they might be my favorite tag team.

"Cool, ummmm...do y'all know where gate 410 is?"

They looked as confused as I was.

"Naw," Pete said, "I think you missed it."

"Damn, well, while I'm here, picture?"

I pulled out my camera and they were really cool.

I walked back and found out what I had done wrong. It was the only gate at a 90-degree angle to the others.

There were wrestlers everywhere. I saw LA Knight, and then Finn Balor. There was Tiffany Straton, whose matching pink luggage had been



featured on a backstage vignette a few months back. I saw Cody Rhodes, the biggest non-Samoan star in the WWE right now. There were a couple of people who looked really familiar, but couldn't place.

Then, I saw Candice LeRae.

For the uninitiated, Candice was one of the best women on the Indy scene for ages, competing in what I consider to be the most insane tag team match ever, a No Rules match where she teamed with the now-disgraced Joey Ryan against the Young Bucks in Pro Wrestling Guerilla. In it, there's a spot where they secretly swap a bag of thumbtacks the Bucks brought in for a bag of Gummi Bears. This led to the greatest announcing call, made by guest commentator Kevin Steen - "Gummi Bears are stupid and delicious."

When I showed it to JP, he loved it and decided to ask for it later, saying he loved the 'Gummi Bear Match'

She was walking out of the bookstore (no, they don't carry my book...) with Indi Hartwell, the Australian who is really good but has only briefly been given the spotlight she deserves.

They very kindly agreed to a photo.

When I got on my flight, I walked past R-Truth, sitting in First Class, as it should be.

The thing is, in 99% of the times I'd fly to JFK, I'd not fly out of Ontario. It only happened because I dropped the kids off to my Mom and drove to the airport so I can drive us home after my trip to New York is done!

It was just meant to be!
And now, on to the Windy Apple!!!



They seated me next to a 7 month old baby.

I'm so glad they did.

On the final leg of my trip from Ontario to JFK, a flight out of Charlotte, I was seated next to a mom holding a cute little baby. The little peach was adorable, and I noticed that there as a tube taped to her pudgy little cheek, running into her nose.

"My kids had those, I said to the mom.

"Oh, were they premature?"

"Yeah," I answered, "28 weeks, almost 24, but Stanford Lucille Packard's managed to keep 'em in there another month."

"We were in Packard's," she said, "two months. She had a O2 deprivation and we ended up there."

It turnout this little croquette of a child had a maxiofacial deformity combined with extreme tongue-tiedness. This combination turnout to be dangerous, and after a feeding, she had vomited in a way that didn't produce anything external, and she aspirated on it. For twenty minutes, this cute little baby was without oxygen. Twenty minutes - an eternity for a tiny human.

They were in Livermore and the closest world-class MNICU is Lucille Packard's Children's Hospital, where my kids were born and lived their first three months.

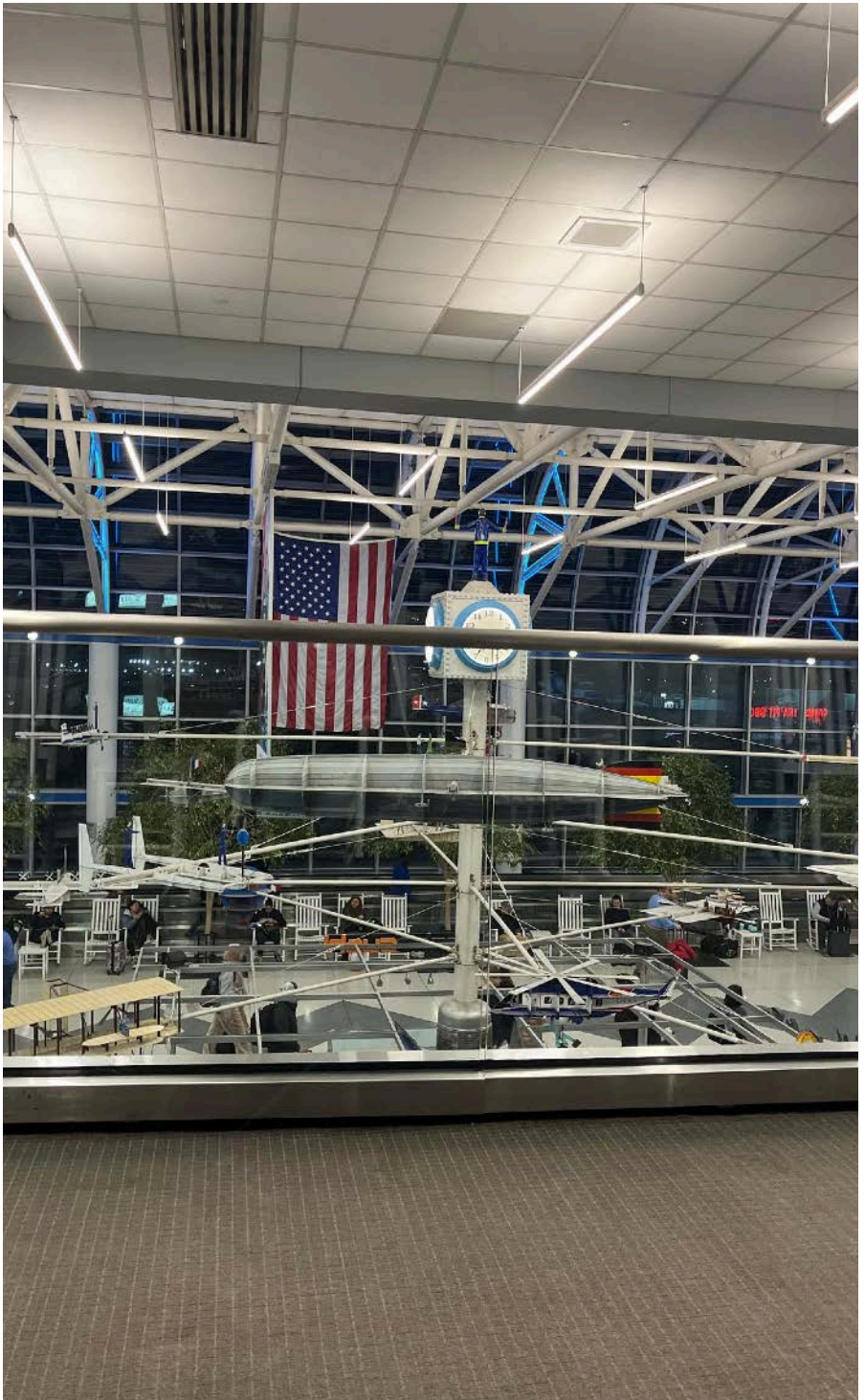
This little one sitting across from me, fingers working and eyes tracking every sound and movement had been deprived of oxygen for 20 minutes, and then spent a month with no detectable brain activity.

But, eventually, she started to show signs of recovery.

She was in Packard's for a couple of months, but Packard's is, first and foremost, a place geared towards keeping Premies alive and flourishing, so they didn't do the type of treatments this little pumpkin would have needed. They left early, and went to Charlotte to a specialist about her feeding needs.

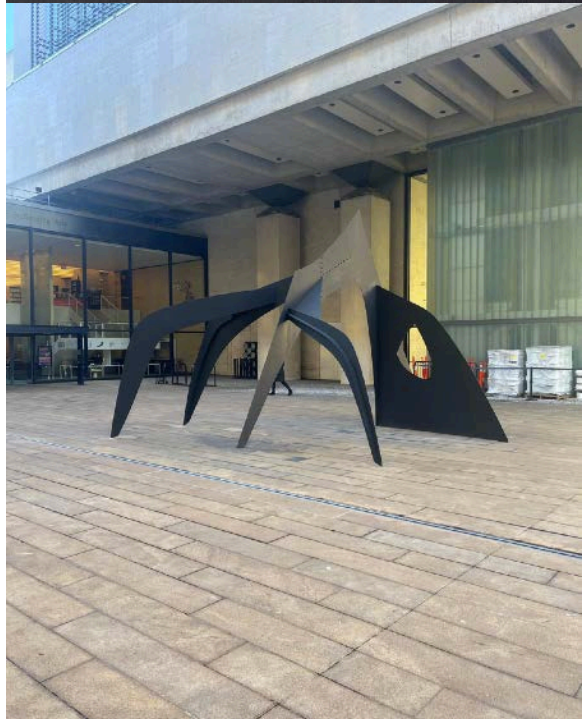
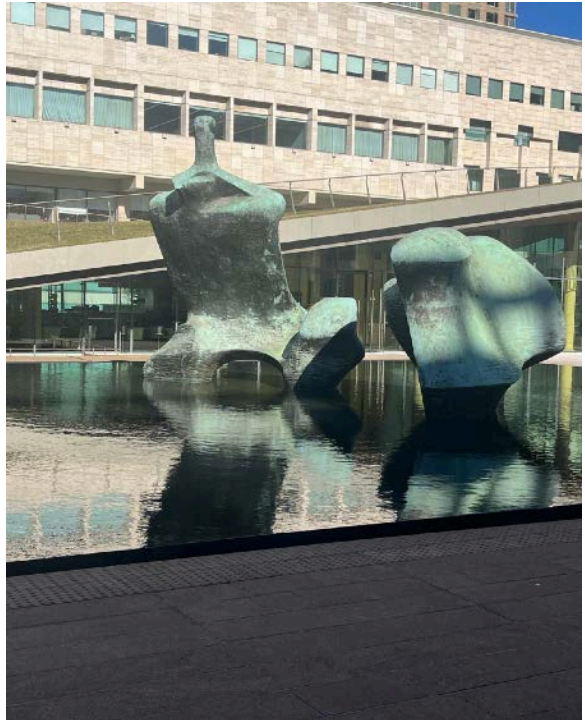
The kid wasn't too fussy, a bit of annoyance when the air pressure changed, but eventually, Mom took out a syringe of milk and attached it to the tube, feeding the kid just like we had done with our kids in the PICN. Then, the little thing feel asleep, and so did I.

As I was leaving, I told 'em, "Nice to meet ya, and take care," and added, "and let your mom relax sometimes, ok?"



I made it to New York around 9am, and then headed to the Holiday Inn Express on 48th in Hells Kitchen. It was a really nice hotel, buzzing with people. There were so many French and Germans roaming the lobby. I dropped my stuff in the room, but headed off to the New York Public Library's Music Library. Since part of this is researching for work, I had to do some research on Martin Kalmakoff, the composer who turned Saroyan's play *Opera*, *Opera* into an actual Opera. There was a lot of good material, so I took a bunch of pictures, but then I realized I was starving.

They don't let you bring tacos into Archives.



There was a Halal Food cart in front of Lincoln Center, which is where the music library is, so after getting a couple of shots of public art around the Center, I grabbed a lamb over rice.

It was heavenly.

The lamb was fantastic, and it wasn't like kofte, or Gyro, but a slice of lamb that he chopped as he heated it. He added some really good rice, lettuce, cucumber, and a bunch of white and hot sauce, which added exactly what it needed. It was filling, and since I had only had a couple of hours of sleep at most, I left and headed down to my hotel room, rested for a bit, grabbed a shower.

After checking my messages, and calling to talk to the kids at my Moms, I headed to see Vanessa's uncle Kyle.

Kyle lives in Chelsea, and I got there and we headed out to see some galleries. Chelsea has so many, and they all closed at 6. I got there about 5, and it meant a speed-run through them. The first was a gorgeous installation video piece that I really wish Vanessa had been there for! She would have loved it!

The final one was totally for me. It was a great installation piece that was highly political. The whole thing was a recreation of a command center, but what kind? There were video games on fake screens, made of cardboard and tape, and recreations of cigarettes, lighters, and even cocaine, made out of only paper, cardboard, tape, and styrofoam. There were piles of 'cell phones' connected to 'ribbon cables' to a computer as if they were being copied. The screens showed images from *Call of Duty* and some that kinda looked like actual war command footage.

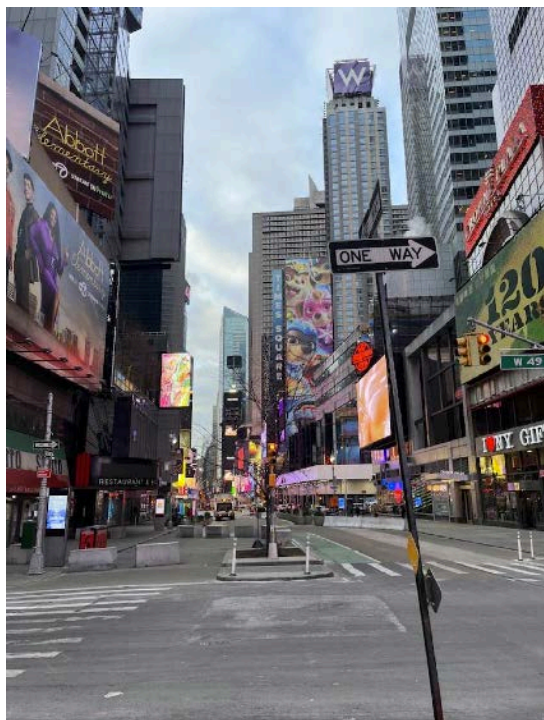
Then, there were life-sized printouts of various soldiers, though most of them had their faces large printouts of emojis.

It was talking about actual war. It was talking about actual war command, and it was talking about the tradition of the LAN party, and off the gold-farmers and level-farms that are people making money on playing video games. It's an incredible and layered work, and I am so glad I got to see it, the last of the pieces I made it to.

All that before heading into a delightful Mexican place. They did an excellent Shrimp Flauta, and the guac was fantastic. Kyle has started writing, and his poetry is pretty darned good! There's a rawness to it that I really like. It's far fuller than mine, but I dig it. Not everyone needs to be a minimalist!

After that, I headed back to the hotel and conked out.
Hard.





Wednesday morning came early, and it was Free Hotel Breakfast time!

I've never seen a Free Breakfast at a hotel so crowded, but there were at least 100 people there, mostly jabbering in German or French. They had biscuits, no gravy, and pork sausage. The biscuit was good, and the sausage was actually awesome! I got a plate, then headed back to my room. I sent a few photos to the wife and kids, and realized that I had promised my little Bella that I would take a lot of pictures of NYC for them, specifically of Time Square, Central Park, and The Empire State Building.

So I went walking.

I headed over 5 streets and found myself in Times Square, practically empty. It was about





30 degrees out and not yet 7am. I got pictures and messaged them to my Mom who passed them on to the kids. They have never been to New York, and they really wanted to go.

I walked through the Theatre District, getting a picture of the Booth Theatre, where William Saroyan's *The Time of Your Life* premiered in 1939. That was a part of my work, which is the only way I could afford to go to NYC: I was getting paid for the hours I did work stuff!

Gotta love multi-dipping!

I headed back to the hotel, grabbed a couple of more sausages, then headed out to my first museum of the trip – MoMA

On my way, I did a pass through Rockefeller Center, which basically became a de facto Art Deco photography crawl! There's so much Art Deco, and most of it is adornment, which I love. I got a ton of photos, then looked at the time and saw I had about 5 minutes to make it 8 blocks.

I made it with seconds to spare!









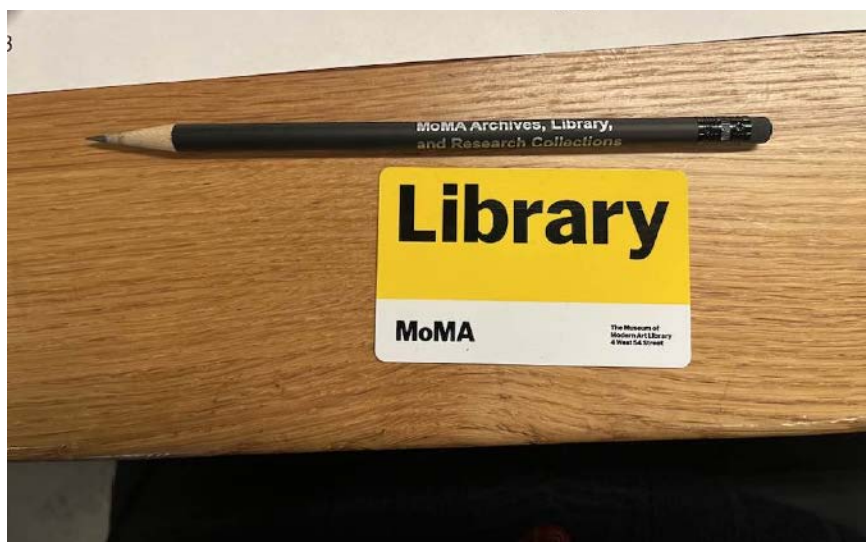
The Museum of Modern Art is my favorite museum in the world. It's got more artworks that I love than any other. There's Pop Art, arguably the greatest collection of POP anywhere. There's all the great Abstract Expressionist works, though there were fewer on display this time. There's amazing early Modernist stuff, and on and on and on. I was so excited, and I got there a little early, so I wandered about, taking pics of Public Art. There's a lot of it in NYC.

I travel light; I never had anything more than my phone, wallet, and a thing of Listerine strips with me. This meant I skipped all the bag inspection lines. So, I headed straight in and went through the first floor. I didn't get to see everything before I got my alarm reminding me that I had an appointment in the Library.

And yes, MoMA has a library.

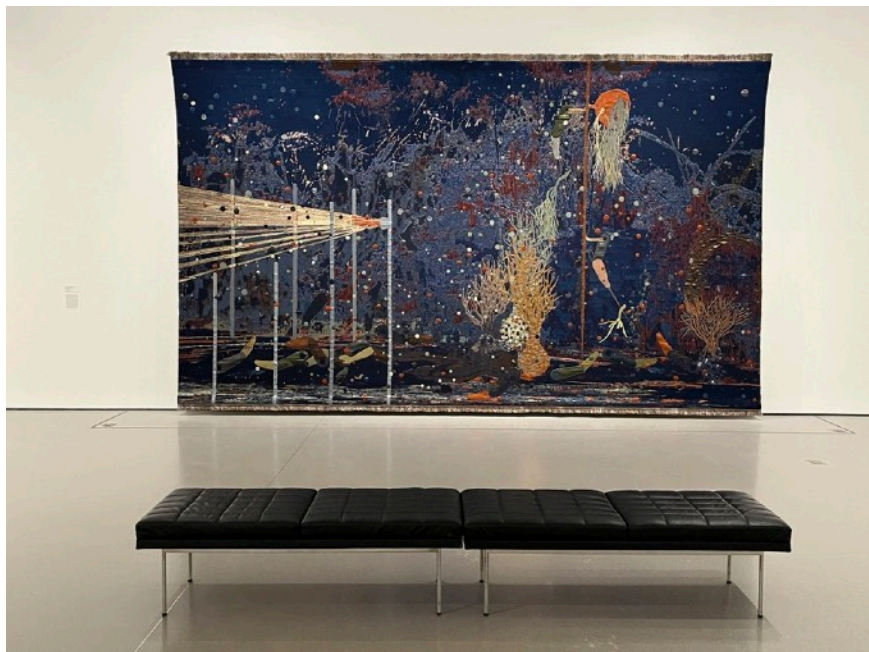
I've written about Aspen Magazine more than once, it's the famous 1960s magazine in a box. They have almost all of them, though access to issues 3, the Pop Art issues edited by Andy Warhol, is extremely limited. Still, I got a great look at the stuff.

Plus, a MoMA Library card!



I did my picture taking in the library, and then headed out to look at more paintings and sculptures! It's my favorite art museum in the world, but there's always something new even for me!





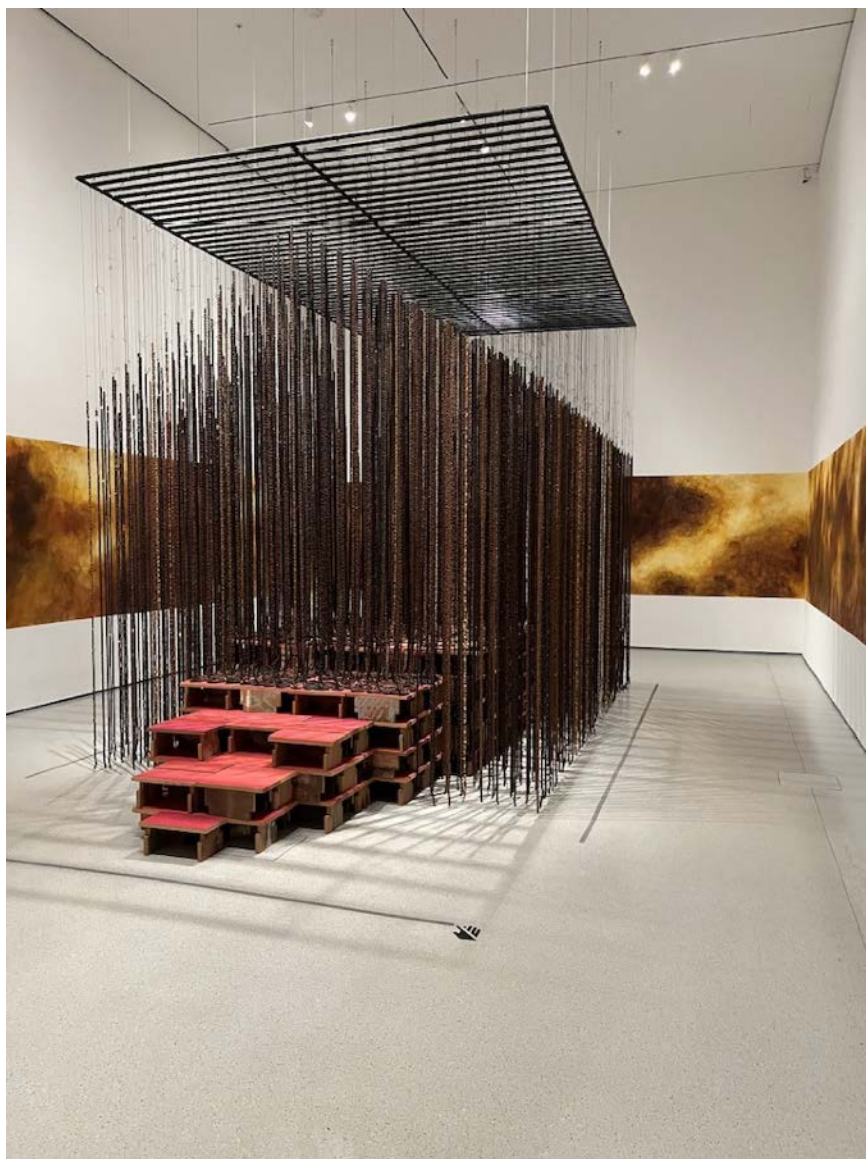
- ↑ Escalators
- ↑ Elevators ↗
- ↑ Café
- ↑ Restrooms
- ↑ Education and
Research Building
- ← Galleries



The sad thing is, what with all the snow the previous week, the Sculpture Garden was closed, thus I could not visit the site where Vanessa and I got married back in 2014.

Could still look out on it from various points in the building, and you can see the low bridge across the reflecting pond where we were married!





This piece, done by the amazing Montien Boonma, is a 'house' made of beads that are infused with spices and herbs. You can smell it from several galleries away. It's one of the most incredible multi-sensory experiences I've ever enjoyed at MoMA.







MoMA is where I first really engaged with Surrealism. They have one of the finest collection of Surrealist artworks in the world, and they have arguably the single most important: Persistence of Memory by Dali.

The way they've moved about the Surrealism room is really impressive!





Overall, MoMA is still my favorite museum in the world. They move things on and off display, but you can almost always count on the major classics, like *Starry Night* and *Canyon and Bed* and a couple of Pollocks and a couple of Rothkos. One of my faves I was glad to see on display for the first time that I've been there - *Love* by Marisol. How can you not love a piece where a disembodied face is deepthroating a Coke bottle???





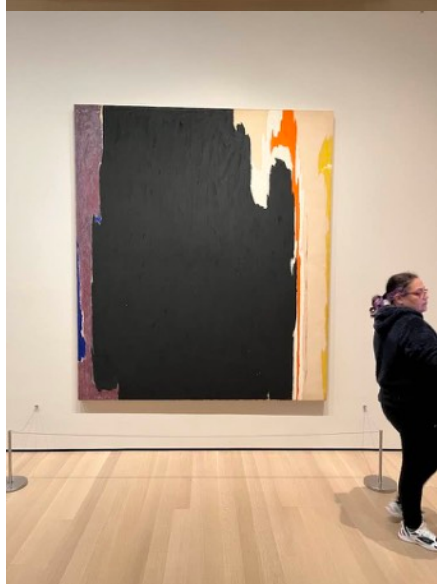
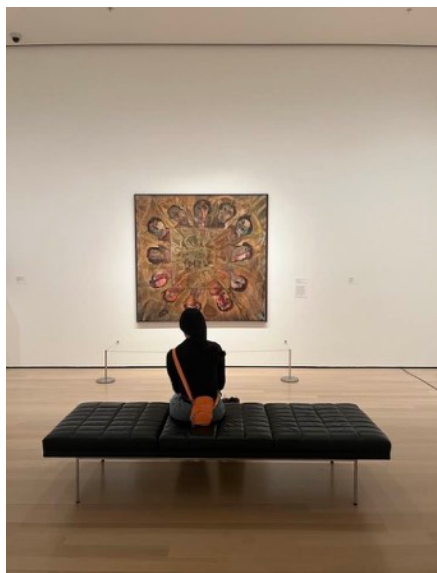
My feet were killing me, so I wanted to get some more research done and get a sit for an hour or two.

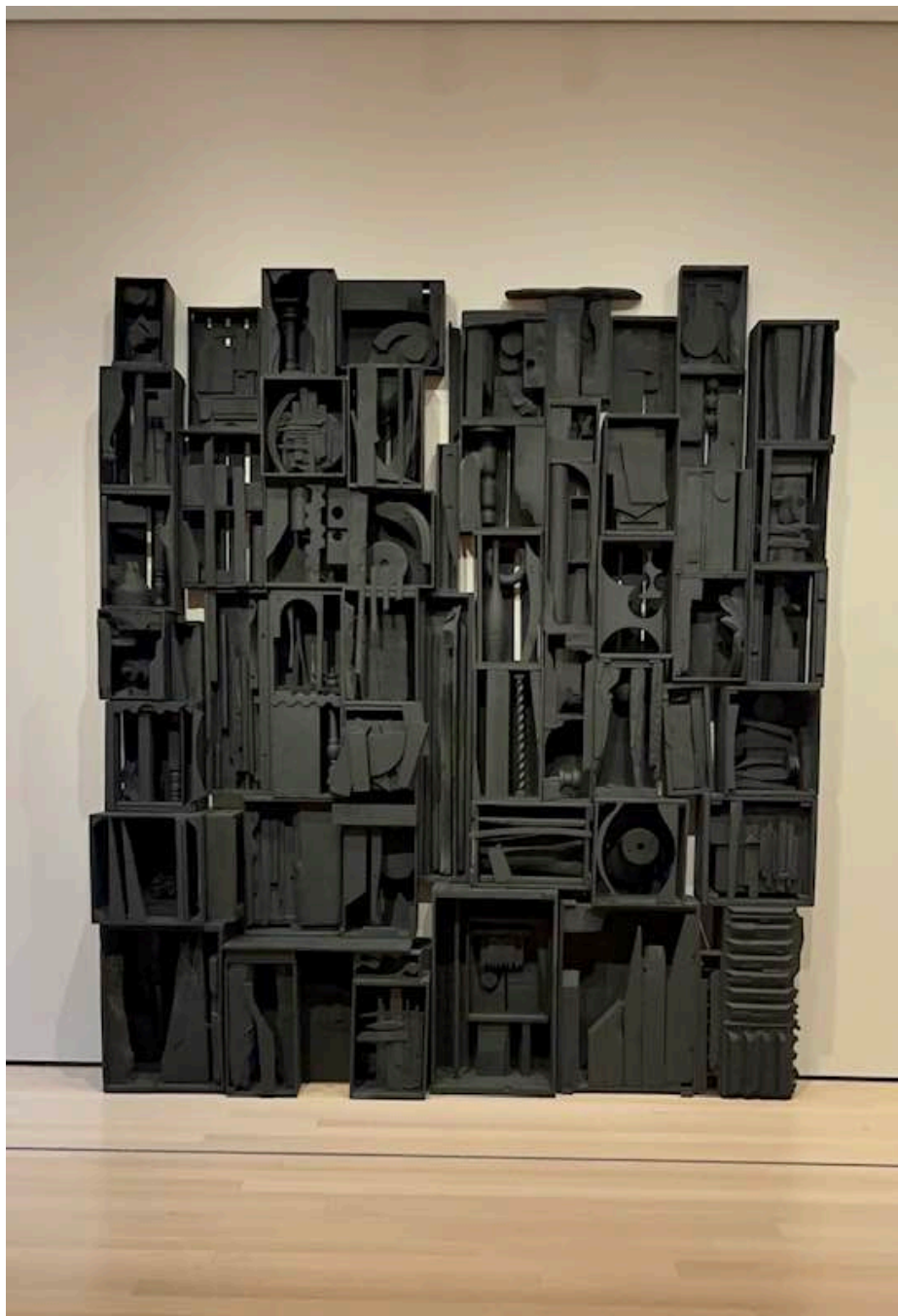
Saroyan did a lot of writing for television in the 1950s, for series like *Omnibus*, and even allowed adaptation of his plays for shows like *Playhouse 90*. They adapted *The Time of Your Life*, but it's not one of the episodes that's on DVD, so I went to the Paley Center and found that they had it on their internal viewing system.

Jackie Gleason was the star, and it's a good episode, but really, the whole reason to watch it is Jack Klugman. They also had a display about the Super Bowl on TV which was kinda cool.

After that, I was hungry and I could go in and out of the MoMA all day, so I figured I'd go and grab a delightful lunch! I ordered the polenta with short rib and roasted carrots and it was probably the best thing I've ever eaten at a museum restaurant!







That evening, I was meeting a friend.

And by meeting, I meant for the first time.

Lisa Stock is an AMAZING filmmaker! She's made several films that some would call Magical Realism, but me, I call them cinematic fables. We met at an AMAZING Lucha-themed restaurant on 57th. Only mistake I made was going to East 57th instead of West 57th. 1.2 mile walk fixed that and I was only a few minutes late!



Back to the Hotel with me! I slept like a log, getting up just in time for a shower and then the Breakfast!

It was disappointing; terrible egg sandwiches. I headed out for a walk after grabbing some decaf coffee. I went about two blocks and ran into something unexpected.- The USS Intrepid!



I walked around along the water for a bit, then made my way back to the Hotel an hour and a half later. The Breakfast had basically been cleaned out by the ravenous tourists and they were busy re-stocking. I needed to get my stuff and move uptown!

I had got a deal on a place at 94th and Broadway called the Night Hotel. I called an Uber and made a last pass through the Breakfast area - SAUSAGE!!!

I grabbed a plate and as I waited, I polished it off so I'd have a delicious breakfast. Of course, I had museums to visit and I march on my stomach!

I checked into my new hotel after the Uber dropped me off.

It wasn't a dump; it had certainly seen better days.

Everything looked worn and old, but it was clean. The one thing it was also was dry. Like the Sahara. I immediately opened up the windows the full three inches the blockers would allow. I could feel myself mummifying!

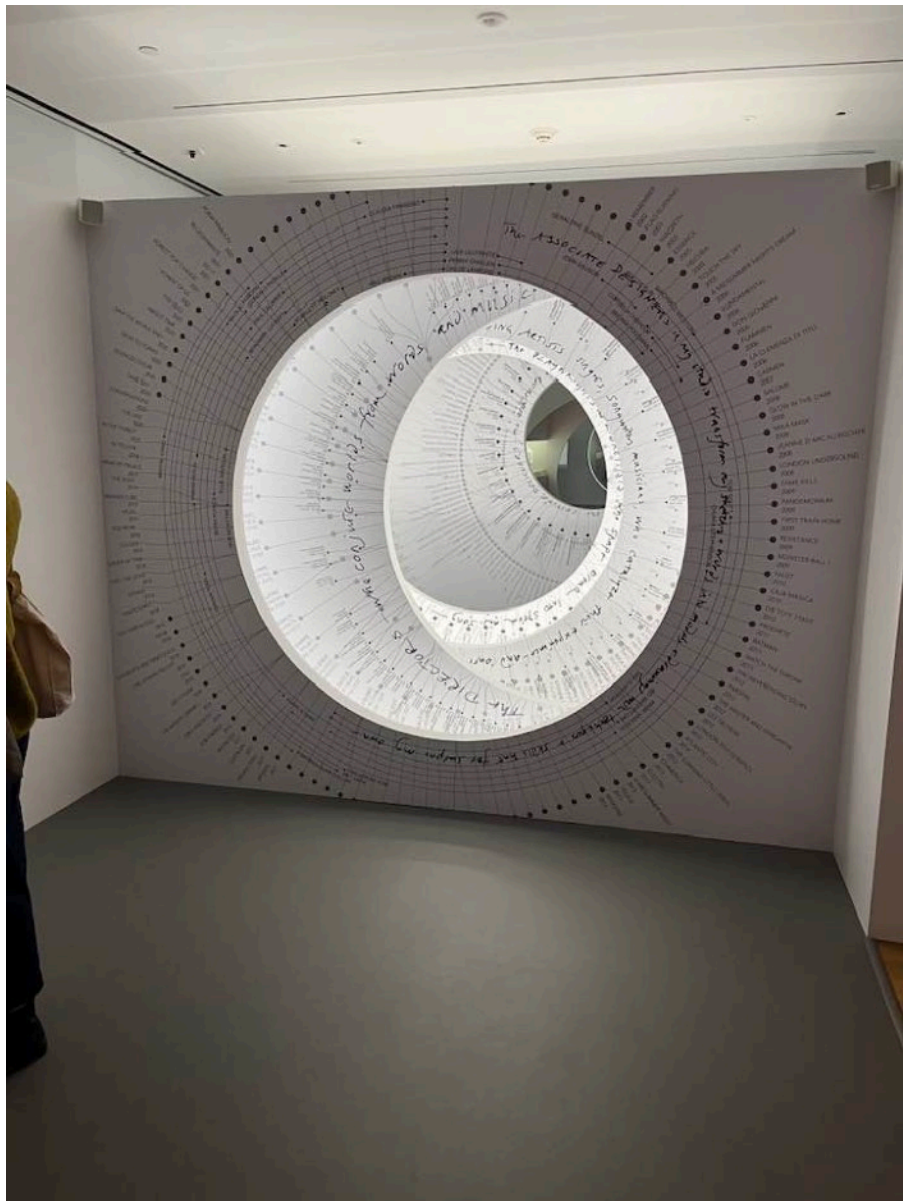
I didn't stay long, I dropped off my bags and headed across Central Park towards the Guggenheim. I usually try to walk through the park at least once every visit, and up until then, I had only walked along the outer rim of the park. It was full of squirrels.

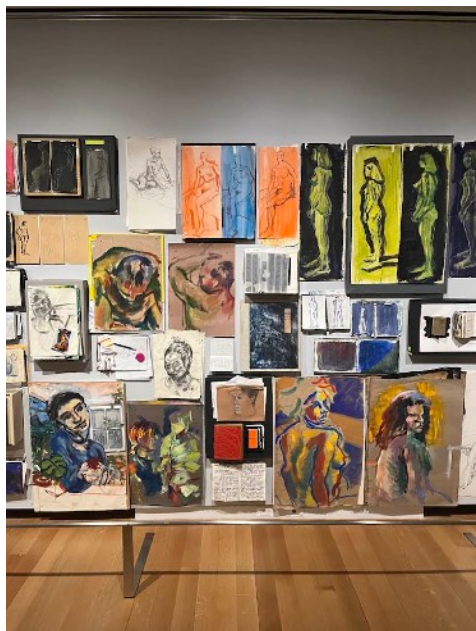
And people walking small dogs.

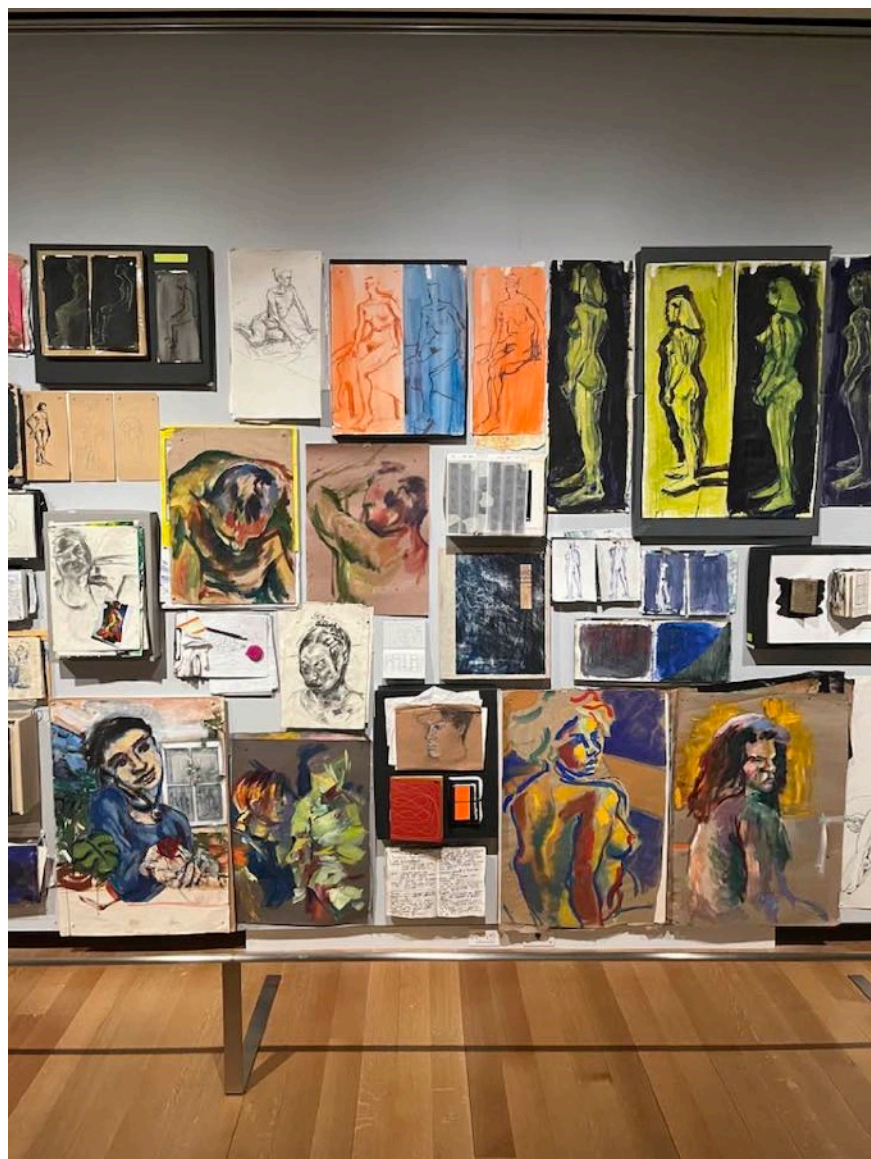
I got to the Guggenheim, a museum I had never been to, and looked at the ticket I'd bought on-line. It was for 10:30. It was now 9:55. I had walked past the Copper-Hewitt Design Museum, a Smithsonian. I figured I could squeeze in a quick visit while I waited for my ticket time.

I'm really glad I did.

They had an AMAZING exhibition of the work of the design Es Devlin. She does a ton of stuff, from books to concerts. To me, the most interesting things they had were her models for stage productions. I stayed for almost an hour since I could arrive anytime AFTER my ticketed time at the Guggenheim.







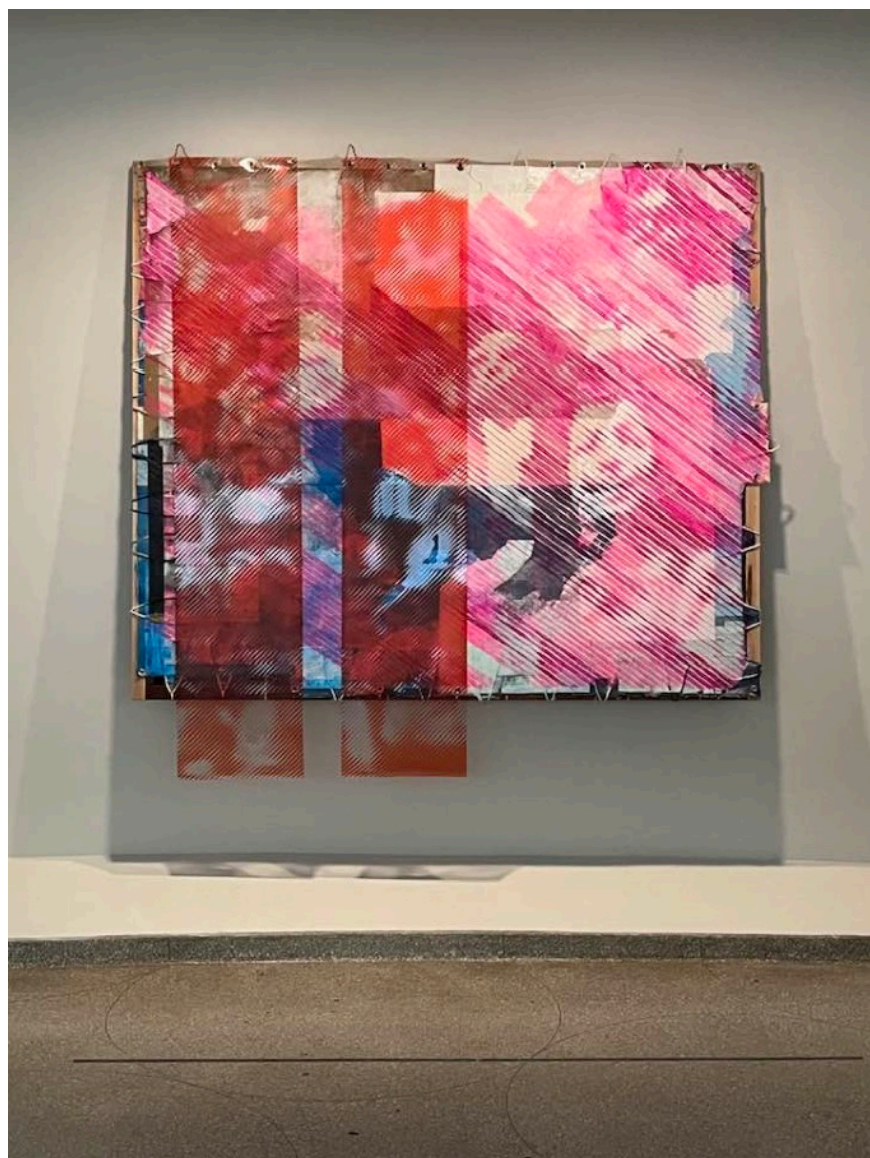
The Guggenheim is a museum I've wanted to visit for ages. The museum itself is showing its age, but the art was fantastic! A large chunk of the exhibit space was being revamped, and I take it that it was the portion when much of the permanent collection lives. The exhibit that was there, *Going Dark*, was an excellent show!













There was a Japanese photographer and his model in one of the exhibit alcoves, which is one of the best features of the Guggenheim's design. She was lovely, and VERY SERIOUS. The photographer, on the other hand, was joking and laughing with every passer-by! It was fun to watch 'em, and she gave him a lot to work with as he was shooting.

I headed down to the permanent collection that was on display, and it was kinda neat. Some Picasso, Impressionists, a Rousseau or two.

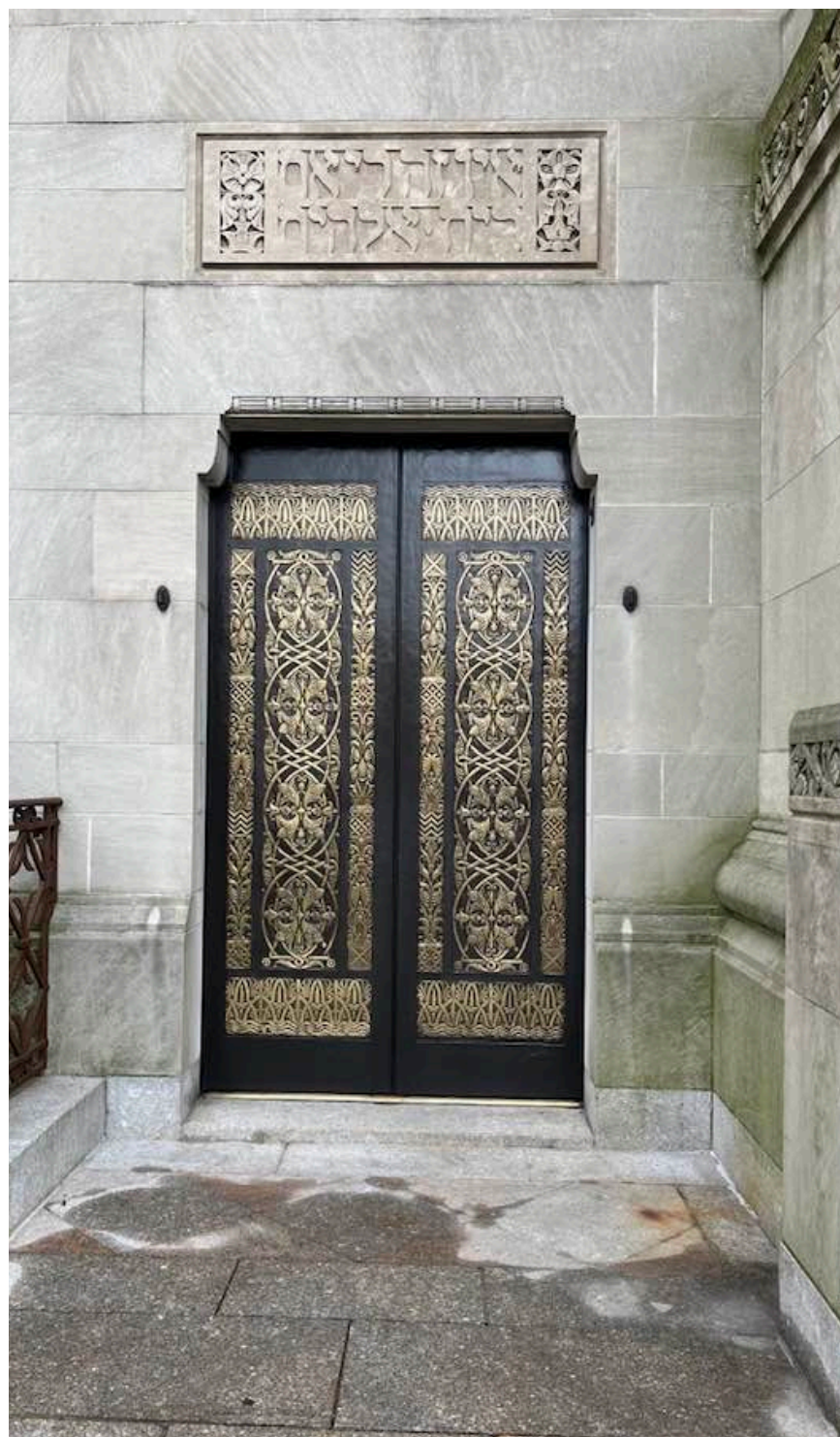


I had timed things poorly.

I was done in the Guggenheim about 130, and I had nothing to do until about 630. I figured I was in New York, so I should walk about, and I did just that.

I explored the area from 71st through 43rd streets. It was a nice, and a LONG walk. I had to stop periodically, mostly at Starbucks where I would buy a hot tea. It was a nice walk, I saw a lot of that particular area.













I headed to Junior's, right on Times Square, to get some goulash. It wasn't bad, and it had been a LONG time since I had any, so it hit the spot.

After that, I was off to attend the tale of...Sweeney Todd.



I love Sondheim, and Sweeney is my second favorite of his musicals. While waiting in line, I saw the actress Amy Acker, who was in a film I programmed for this year's Cinequest! I didn't talk to her, but it was cool to see her!

The show was amazing, with the incredible Sutton Foster as Mrs. Lovvett. I was so glad I got to go!





I headed back to my hotel, walking past a few theatre and taking lots of pictures. I made it back, got some sleep, listening to podcasts to help me deal with the desert in the room. Even with the windows open. I had a big day on Friday - The Met!!!



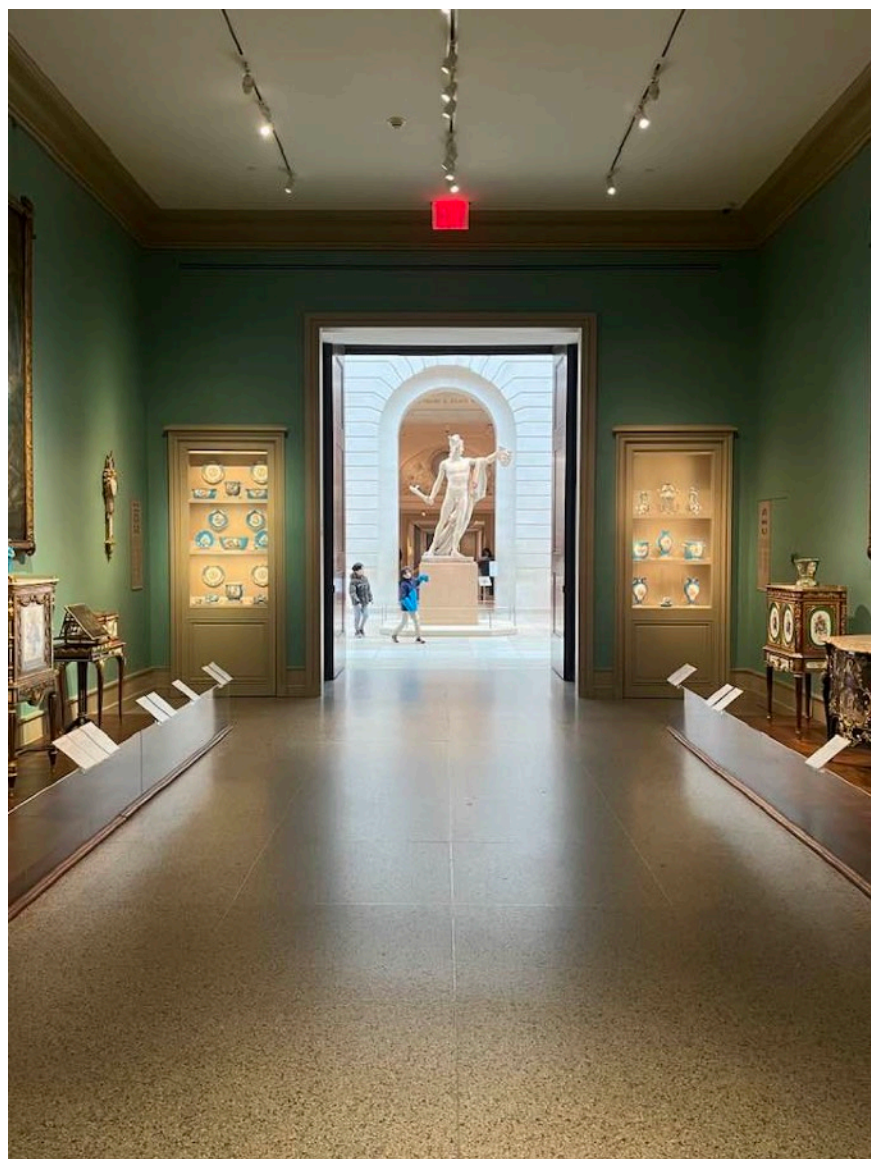


I've been to The Met three or four times over the years. The last time, 2013, I only had a couple of hours. Still, I saw a whole lot of it. This time, I had no other plans all day and I was there right at opening.

And so, it began, my journey through one of the great encyclopedic museums in the entire world.











I took a tour. I rarely do tours, but this was a good one with a tour guide who was great! He even did a portion of the Modern Art collections, which is where my heart lives.





I made a lap, then headed outside. I needed food, and the cart out front had...wait for it...chicken on a stick.

But really, it was more of a hot dog.

You see, they took chicken on skewers and cooked it on their grill-top. Then they put it, stick and all, in a hot dog bun. All that for six bucks, I think. It was pretty tasty, and with a squeeze of the spicy sauce it was fantastic!

I headed back in to The Met for another lap. This time I came across something very very cool - Before Yesterday We Could Fly: An Afrofuturist Period Room

Now, this is like one of the Met's recreation rooms (which usually bore me) but its recreating a time that has never existed - or at least not yet. It's a beautiful project and one that I wish I could have photographed better!



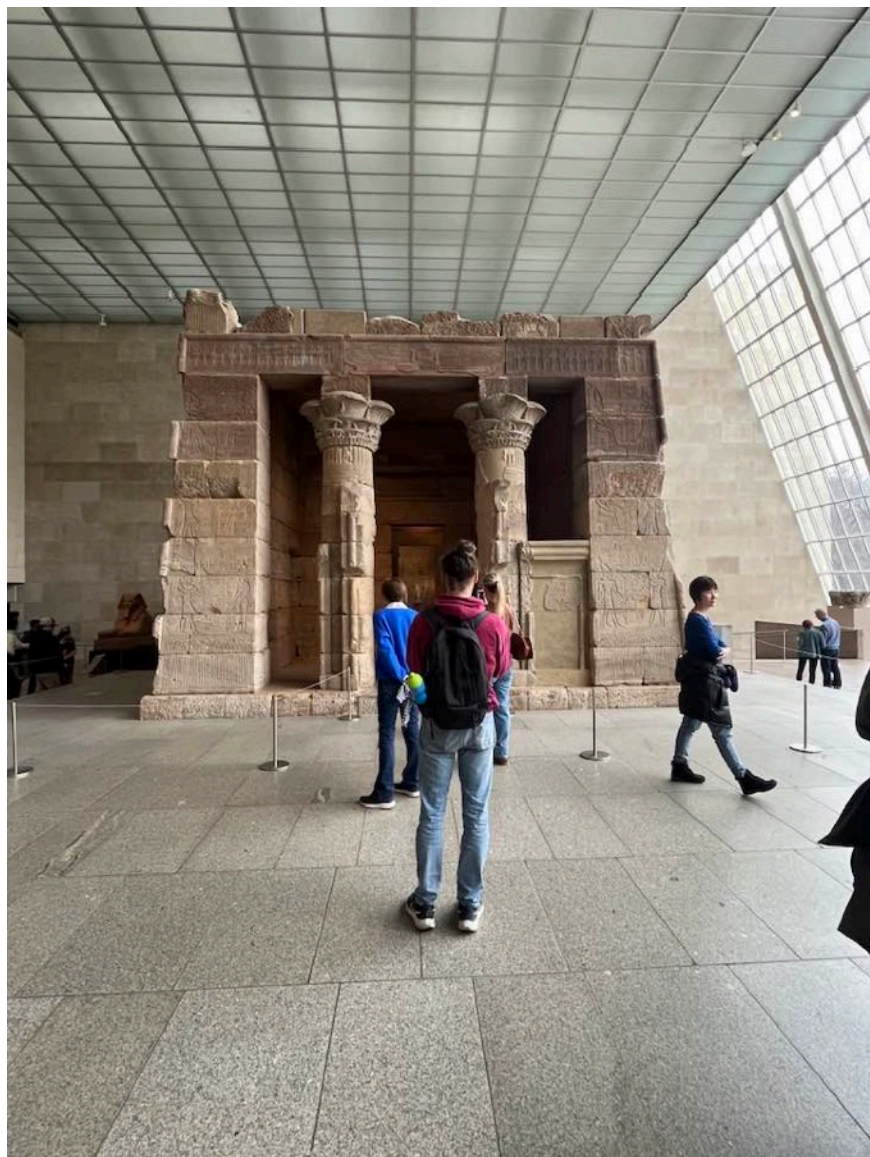




Of course, the Met is famous for its Egyptology collection, and I wish I'd made it back before we'd done the issue last year! I did, however, get to see a lot of the stuff I remembered from my other visits where I'd spent much of my time with these objects.

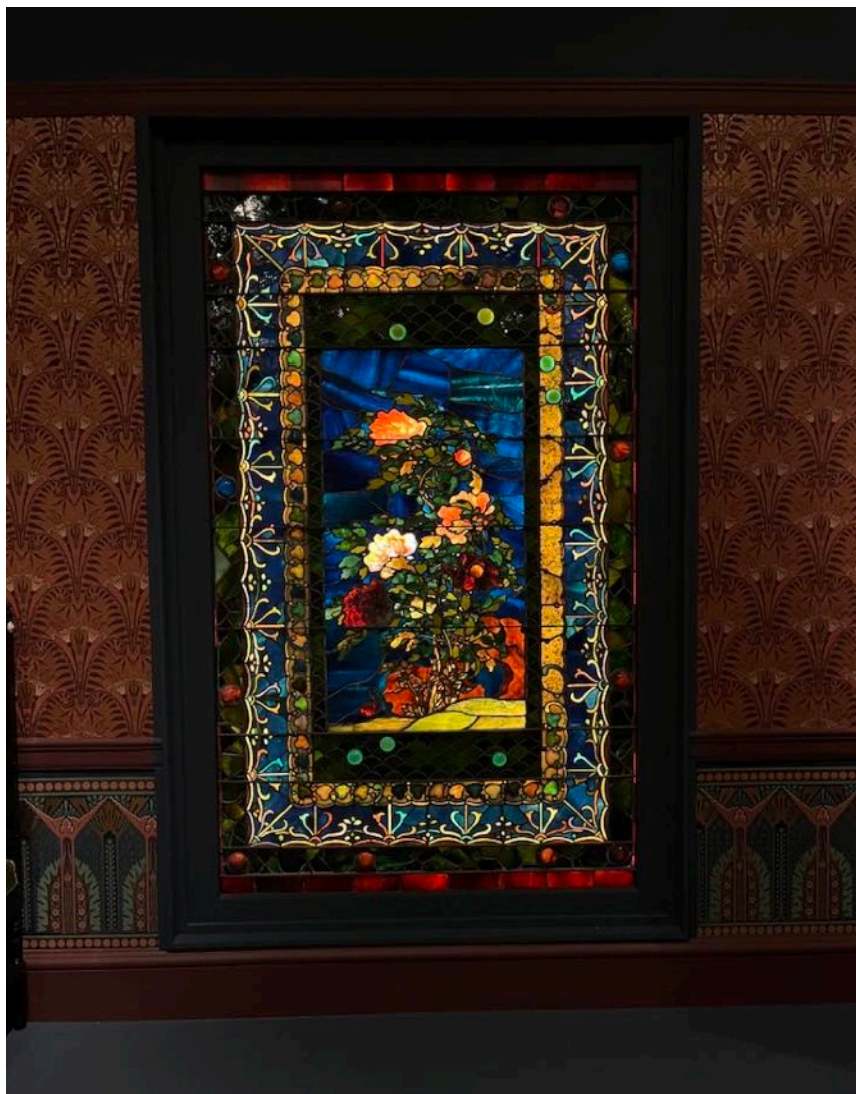








Ultimately, I gave up on being systematic and just started wandering, taking pictures of everything. I already have almost no memory of the actual visit, but I have the photos, and those bring back glimpses. This memory stuff I'm going through sucks, but I realized that it's all the social media, all the zines, all the thousands of photos that are going to keep me at least somewhat attached to a past I can't recall with them. That made me happy when I realized.

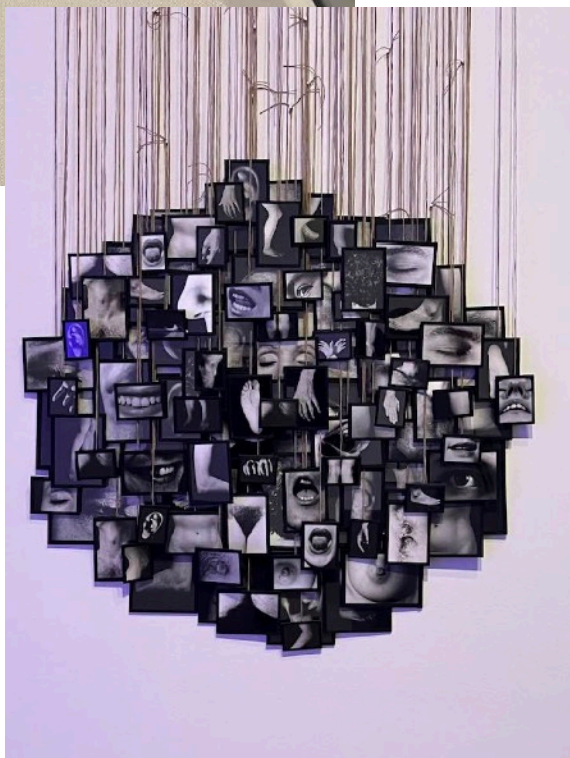






Amadeo Modigliani, Italian, 1894-1920
Woman's Head, 1912
Limestone
The Sir and Mrs. Klaus G. Roke Collection, 1987 (1987.148.16)

Modigliani began to produce stone sculptures in 1915. His works reflect knowledge of ancient Egyptian, Etruscan, Greek, and African art. The artist became familiar with West and Central African sculpture through French Cubist and art collector Frank Burty Haviland (1886-1971), who later owned this particular work. The style of each abstract, elongated head is evident in Modigliani's subsequent figure paintings.



Paul Manship is an artist whose work I would never come up with as being among my faves, his contemporary Benny Bufano is my all-time fave, but man, these three bears in the big ol' atrium might be my fave sculpture in all of New York. They're just so regal, and they're streamlined, and they're cute! I love this trio, and every trip back, I make sure to stop by and get another picture of 'em.







Francis Bacon
Portrait of a Woman
1962
Oil on canvas
100 x 70 cm



All in all, The Met was really the museum highlight of the trip. Better than MoMA, better than The Guggenheim, better even than wandering the galleries of Chelsea.

Afterwards, my feet were killing me, but I also didn't want to spring for an entire cab ride from The Met to my hotel. So, I started walking, and quickly realized that it was well after 5 and I was starving. I moved up Broadway, and my hotel was a LONG way up, and eventually I came across a sign that I needed to stop and eat at.

The Carnegie Deli.

I've eaten there on pretty much every trip I've taken to NYC, and though I'm off fatty meats these days, I'd walked more than 5 miles a day, so I thought I'd earned it! I got myself a reuben.



I ate, I called an Uber. My phone died. I ended up not being able to get an Uber. I walked to Lincoln Center, and there, I grabbed a cab. It was easy, and I rode back to my sub-standard hotel, where I grabbed a bath, long and hot, and then went to sleep.

Because I had reason to get up early.

You see, there was a wrestling pay-per-view on Saturday morning. Saturday was also the day I was flying out, so I couldn't really do any touring.

I had also chosen Saturday to be the one day I rode the subway.

So, the pay-per-view was originating live from Australia, so it started at 5am East Coast time! I set my alarm, and since I was asleep about 9, it wasn't any big deal. I watched the first match all the way through on my laptop, and then I grabbed another soothing bath. Then I got out and realized that it was 6am, and one of the breakfast places around might be open.

I walked down Broadway and found a breakfast place. I don't remember what it was called, but when I walked in, there was a guy who looked like Gargamel from *The Smurfs*, only with a worse attitude. He had me sit down, and five minutes later, he brought me, the only customer, a menu. I ordered then and there - Steak and eggs.

Yes, I hate eggs, but I got em scrambled, and with wheat toast in a little sammich, I didn't notice.

Especially since the eggs were barely seasoned, while the steak may have been found in a salt mine decades ago. It wasn't good, but it was steak and I ate it.

While I was eating, I watched the wrestling on my phone, waiting until the end of the tag team title match to get up, pay my bill, and head back to my hotel to pack.

And that took like 10 minutes.

After that, I got my bag, my CPAP, and headed down to the Subway station. It was a 90 minute trip to the Airtrain, and then fifteen minutes to JFK, and then a couple of Jamaican beef patties, and then I flew home, to see my kids, then to drive home.

It was a wonderful trip.



