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**GALLERY STARS:** Local art luminaries include (left to right) Jennifer Amadeo-Holl, Leslie Hall, Stacy Quackenbush, Jeff Smith, Stephen Sheffield and Brian Kneip.

Six Boston artists recommend the Hub's best spots for appreciating art

by Josh B. Wardrop and Marketa Hulpachova  
photography by Craig MacCormack

Brian Kneip photo by George Lynde

Okay, so Boston can't lay claim to Picasso, Andy Warhol or the Sistine Chapel. And if you want to see the Mona Lisa...well, France is a long swim, so you better get started. But that doesn't change the fact that today's Boston is home to a thriving art community—one that reaches from the modern galleries that dot Newbury Street to artists' enclaves throughout the city such as the SoWa District (South of Washington Street in the South End) and the Fort Point neighborhood down by the harbor in South Boston. From the masterpieces found in places like the Museum of Fine Arts, to the boldest new visionaries in contemporary art found in local galleries and the soon-to-expand Institute of Contemporary Art, great art can be found everywhere in the Hub. Panorama got recommendations on the best places to view art around town from the people who know best—our talented local artists.

### JENNIFER AMADEO-HOLL / PAINTER

**Where can your work be seen?** I actually have an exhibit called Aya Baya Bazaar up right now at the **Judi Rotenberg Gallery** (refer to [listing](#)). "Aya baya" is a sort of nonsense phrase they say to children in Sweden when they misbehave. I'm also exhibited at the **Schoolhouse Galleries** (494 Commercial St., 508-487-4800, Provincetown). **Where are your favorite places to see art in Boston?** I love the Agnes Mongan Center at **Fogg Art Museum** (refer to [listing](#)), which is a study room where you can examine drawings by some of the masters and sit and draw your own versions. And it's not a typical gallery, but the **Map Room at Harvard University** (Pusey Library, Harvard Yard, Cambridge, 617-495-2417) has more than a half million maps, some dating back to the 15th century. **What do you remember about your first piece of artwork?** I



back to the 15th century. **What do you remember about your first piece of artwork?** I drew a birdhouse when I was 5, and looking back at it since...the way I distributed everything on the page—the birds, the birdhouse—was really unusual for a kid's drawing. It seems like I was conscious of size relations between the figures and really attempted to use space the way I do today.

**JEFF SMITH** / CREATOR OF LARGE "ROLLING SCULPTURES" AND 2-D RECYCLED WOOD MOSAICS

**Where can your work be seen?** The **DeCordova Sculpture Park** (refer to [listing](#)), **Mary Etherington's** gallery on Martha's Vineyard, and right here [in my Fort Point studio]. **Where are your favorite places to see art in Boston?** In Fort Point, over at someone's studio. I enjoy talking to [local] colleagues about their artwork. Also, the **Massachusetts College of Art** (621 Huntington Ave., 617-879-7000)—it's off the beaten path, and it gives you a chance to hang with pierced bunny-eared art students. **What do you think of Boston as a town for artists?** The art scene here is good, but there's this schizo bureaucracy that puts good galleries out of business. Anytime someone steps up to the plate to move culture forward, it's shut down. Thank God for the galleries that aren't out to make money. They're the ones that will show you something that's absurd and has no commercial potential.



**STACY QUACKENBUSH** / METAL SCULPTOR

**Where can your work be seen?** I always have some pieces on display at **Judi Rotenberg Gallery**, and I also have some public art out there in the world, including the Firefighters' Memorial in the city of Corning, N.Y. **Where are your favorite places to see art in Boston?** I've always loved the **List Visual Arts Center** and the **MIT Museum** (refer to [listing](#)) which just has really interesting and smart work from contemporary artists. The **Institute for Contemporary Art** (refer to [listing](#)) also has such amazing artists coming in to display work and lecture. And I love the **DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park** (refer to [listing](#), page 35)—it's just a great retreat to go look at the sculpture when you're stressed out. **What do you remember about your first piece of artwork?** I remember being four years old, drawing with crayons and paper at my grandmother's kitchen table, and I remember being bothered by the rough texture of the table because it affected how the drawing looked! I guess it was my first conscious example of knowing how I wanted to create a piece, and how it was affected by the materials.



**STEPHEN SHEFFIELD** / PHOTOGRAPHER/PHOTOCOLLAGIST  
**Where can your work be seen?** I have some work up at **Eastern Standard** (refer to [listing](#)). It's five large historical Boston montages. I also have some up in the halls of the **Charles Hotel** and a historic New York piece up in the Red Hook Brewery in Brooklyn, N.Y. **Where are your favorite places to see art in Boston?** I teach at New England School of Photography, and I religiously take students to **Barbara Krakow Gallery** (refer to [listing](#))—I think she's closest in





caliber to the New York galleries. I also love the **Howard Yezerksi Gallery** (14 Newbury St., 617-262-0550), because they're big backers of photography, and **Judi Rotenberg Gallery**, because they're very forthright in talking to students. And in the SoWa District, I'd say **Bernard Toale** (refer to [listing](#)) has always been a favorite. **What do you think of Boston as a town for artists?** If you've got chutzpah, it's a very good town...not so much if you're timid. There's a lot of great art going on here, but you have to look for it, and you need to dig for opportunities to show your work.



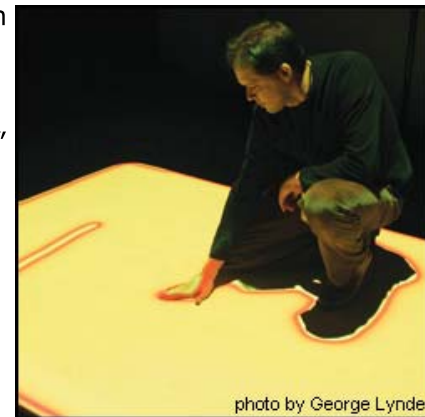
**LESLIE HALL** / GEM SWEATER ARTIST/RAPPER IN LESLIE & THE LYS

**How would you describe your art to somebody?** I'm trying to reignite the gem sweater culture of yesteryear. People are throwing their gem sweaters away, but if you look at them, they're beautiful, historic and well crafted works of art. Nobody else is doing this—I feel like the curator of a museum. I go to school for oil painting, but while many people paint, not many collect gem sweaters. You've got to go with what's different and exciting. In Boston, I think there's truly a gem sweater uprising. **Where can your work be seen?** Two of my pieces were just displayed in the School of the Museum of Fine Arts' Fifth Year student exhibit. You can also go to my website, [www.lesliehall.com](http://www.lesliehall.com), for news about the Mobile Museum of Gem Sweaters. **Where are your favorite places to see art in Boston?** I'm really into the art where you get really up close and you wonder how the hell they made it. At the **Museum of Fine Arts** (refer to [listing](#)), I go straight for the [Koch Gallery], the big room where the paintings go way up to the ceiling.



**BRIAN KNEP** / INTERACTIVE MEDIA ARTIST

**Where can your work be seen?** I'm going to be taking part in the **SoWa Art Walk May 20 & 21** (refer to [listing](#)), and I'll be showing one of my digital pieces, called Flower (Revealed), which is a digital image of a flower on the floor that changes every time someone steps on it. I'm really drawn to "living art" that changes in response to the viewer. **Where are your favorite places to see art in Boston?** I think that the **Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum** (refer to [listing](#)) is an absolute gem, not just because of the artwork but the architecture of the building itself. And I think **Art Interactive** in Cambridge (130 Bishop Allen Drive, 617-498-0100) is showing a lot of really interesting new media work. **What do you remember about your first piece of artwork?** It wasn't my first ever, but the first piece I made that had real resonance for me was in college, I made this sculpted stick figure with an enormous cast of my own hand grasping its head. That was back when I was 17 and everything in the world felt oppressive to me, I guess. 🙄



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## MODERN ART 101

For those looking for a little primer on the history of modern art, have we got the show for you. Consisting of more than 280 pieces from its own collection of European art and spilling out from the Torf and Trustman galleries into the Lower Rotunda, the **Museum of Fine Art's Degas to Picasso** exhibit presents a vast, impressive overview of art that covers nearly seven decades of the 20th century. Nary a big name is left out, as everyone from the title artists to Matisse, Munch, Giacometti, Dali, Rodin and Miro—as well as many lesser-known artists—are represented. The wide-ranging show— representing mediums from sculpture and painting to printmaking and photography—offers glimpses into many of last century's seminal movements, including Impressionism, Symbolism, German Expressionism, Surrealism and just about any other -isms that come to mind. Many of the displayed pieces are often in storage, so now's the time to see them (the show runs through July 23) before they disappear again. Refer to listing.

—*Scott Roberto*

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Henri Matisse, Carmelina, 1903,  
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