



**New York City and NJ Stay-cation
In lieu of France Switzerland trip
May 17 - 30, 2015**

I was frustrated being home for too long, having missed three weeks of France and Switzerland, that I booked a Solo Trip to Paris for December. Those plans weren't enough to appease me. I began wondering why I thought I needed Scotland, Croatia, Spain, Italy, etc. (all coming up soon) when I'm living practically next door to the #1 Tourist Destination in the World – NYC. Yet I wasn't comfortable being totally away (I presume you know the reason for the trip being aborted) so day-trips made sense.

Sunday, May 17 – Day 1 in New York City

I was bound for the new Whitney Museum until I figured out it was not only new but featured in about every newspaper and magazine I saw, and the lines were apparently dreadful, so the logic was to skip the Whitney until mid-week and get a timed-entry ticket when I did go. Here's notes home from my day in the Theatre District, Columbus Circle, Central Park and a festival, the Guggenheim Museum, my favorite restaurant on 73rd and then the majestic and amazing mansion housing the Frick Museum Collection.

Tom, you ask how my feet are holding up. And I have been on them all day but I've been pretty much trained to do that so it's okay.

The Frick museum was a real treat. It is a real living house or residence left as Frick left it in 1919 filled full of really special artwork all condensed. Who ever heard of there being three out of only about a dozen remaining Vermeer's? And Rembrandts including a self-portrait. And Van Dyck's and Sir Joshua Reynolds and Gainsborough, on and on. There was a 1400s special on Flemish tapestry representing drawings from el coyote.

The gardens and the huge magnolia trees are said to be the largest and most magnificent to New York.

I've now walked to the Trump Tower and am in the bar having, you couldn't guess it, a Rob Roy. Surely that brings back special memories from when we met.

In between I have walked through Central Park, past the Metropolitan Museum of art and 10 blocks more to the Guggenheim. In Central Park there was an AIDS walk going on and lots of music, food being generously given out which I readily accepted, and lots of exuberance.

Then, after the Guggenheim, I reverted to Madison Avenue and walked along all those ritzy stores that used to be in Midtown and have now moved to the 70s and 80s. You might recall that Midtown, where the ritzy stores used to be, is now filled full of chain restaurants and chain cheapie stores.

I think the buses going south toward home are either 8 o'clock or 10 o'clock. So I will either need to Scurry or find something else to do. It is never hard to find something to do in New York City.

It was so nice to eat at my favorite little restaurant off Madison on 73rd. It is been a long time favorite, maybe since I started coming to New York City for marathons in 2002. It was absolutely full with a line of people and they all seem to be either runners stopping by to pick up an order or locals waiting for a table. Being only one person allowed me to have one of those tiny tables at the very front near the window.

I watched them dealing with their local regulars in the special way that we saw the Swiss do in Hong Kong. Especially the old folks they were very kind to.

While at the Frick gift shop, I found a very sweet little gift for you. I think it will be a surprise. When I saw it, it was a surprise to me too. (It was a book of historical panorama pull out drawings of the Grand Boulevards of Paris as designed by Haussmann and which still remain as designed.)

Soon I will start my walk back toward 39 to 40th St. over on Eighth Avenue and the port authority. I searched for the special little pastry and bread shop on my way to the Guggenheim but had no luck.

Earlier: My math wasn't very good. I walked from 40th to 90th plus across Central Park from 8th over to Madison which would count as 4th.

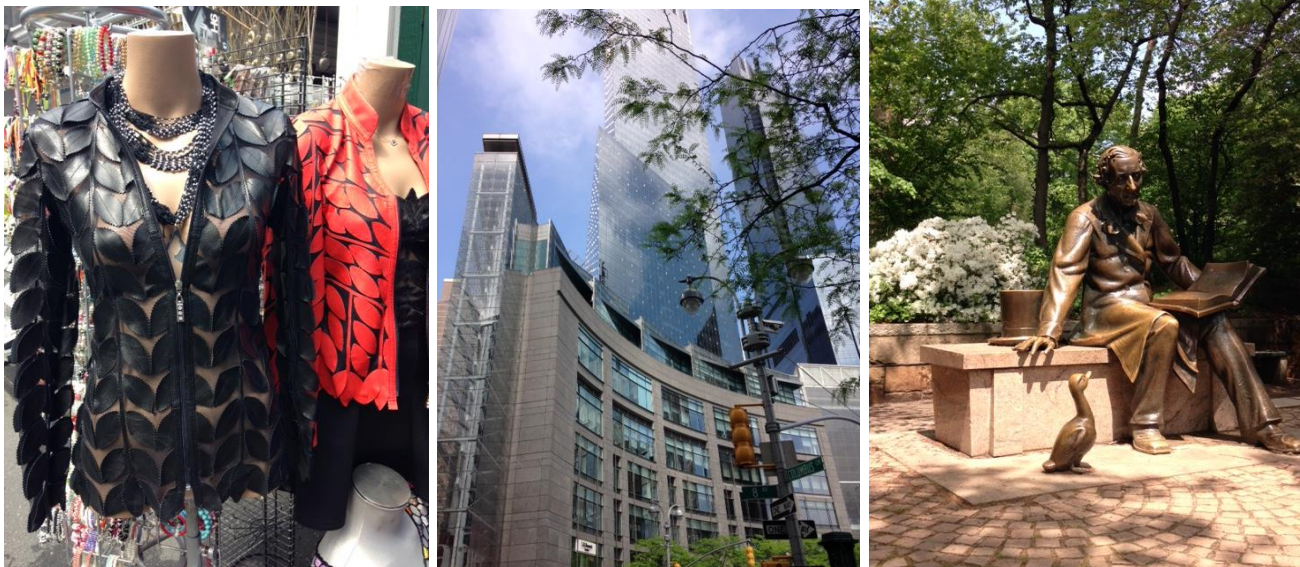
The Guggenheim had some treasures certainly worth the walk but the main Frank Lloyd Wright building circular was closed making for odd access to each of the 4 floors. The reduced rate as a result wasn't much reduced.

Earlier yet: At Via Quadronne (flying pig?) at 73rd and Madison. Many years long term favorite little local cafe.

Earlier yet: I'm at the USO having some coffee and a little snack. I asked the volunteer gals about the line at the Whitney but they didn't know so I'll continue on my 20 to 30 block walk to the Guggenheim and then the Frick. They think both have cafeterias that I'll check.

First report: I'm on bus. With wi fi. It was 15 minutes late which is ok as I've got no schedule.

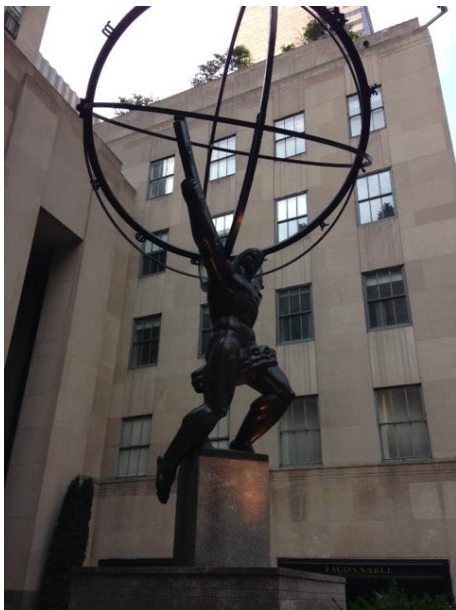
Pictures



In the Theatre District they've opened sections for fairs/vendor sellers. Instead of farmers market – its crafts. This booth was full of garments using leaves on a sheer background. Typical No price was marked suggesting that it was up for grabs and bargaining. Then onto Columbus Circle and the new Times Warner Building; I'd been on this circle many times but the fond memories of finishing up the NYC marathon five times shortly after this corner was strong. In Central Park I couldn't skip a hill to climb, or a rock outcropping begging for a view, and then into the children's corners with the Hans Christian Anderson statuary.



The Guggenheim is famous for having been designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and I'm a fan. But inside the Frick mansion was sublime. This courtyard was the only place photos were allowed. It used to be the driveway from 70th to 71st. I walked back to midtown via the new Madison Avenue. Madison Avenue designer shops have mostly moved to the 70s and 80s and the old ritzy Madison Avenue has been taken over by the Gaps of the world. These rhinestone sneakers were the gaudiest footwear I've ever seen.



One must go by Rockefeller Plaza and St Patrick's Cathedral despite the hordes of people there. But the heavy sea of humanity can't be topped until you've been in Times Square where every costumed Disney character and even the Naked Cowboy are trying to get a \$1 in return for taking their picture. It was a good way to end my day and get out of there fast.

<http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/visit>



Completed in 1959, the Guggenheim's Frank Lloyd Wright–designed museum is among the 20th century's most important architectural landmarks. The museum's great rotunda has been the site of many celebrated special exhibitions, while its smaller galleries are devoted to the Guggenheim's renowned collection, which ranges from Impressionism through contemporary art.

Exhibition, on view in a dedicated gallery, presents highlights from Justin Thannhauser's bequest of a significant portion of his art collection—including masterpieces by Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, Edouard Manet, Claude Monet, Pablo Picasso, Camille Pissarro, Pierre Auguste Renoir, and Vincent van Gogh—to the Guggenheim Museum.

From a Mysterious Mansion to a Ralph Lauren Store - NYTimes.com
<http://mobile.nytimes.com/2010/10/10/realestate/10scapes.html?referrer=>

72nd Street (Manhattan) - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/72nd_Street_%28Manhattan%29



Frick Collection - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frick_Collection

Amazingly well preserved home full of top rated art.

The Frick is one of the pre-eminent small art museums in the United States, with a high-quality collection of old master paintings and fine furniture housed in six galleries within the former residence. Frick had intended the mansion to eventually become a museum. Many of the paintings are still arranged according to Frick's design. Besides its permanent collection, the Frick has always organized small, focused temporary exhibitions.

The collection features some of the best-known paintings by major European artists, as well as numerous works of sculpture and porcelain. It also has 18th century French furniture, Limoges enamel, and Oriental rugs. After Frick's death, his daughter, Helen Clay Frick, expanded the collection, with a third of its artworks acquired since 1919. Although the museum cannot lend the two-thirds that belonged to Frick, as stipulated in his will, the Frick Collection does lend artworks and objects acquired since his death.

Included in the collection are Jean-Honoré Fragonard's masterpiece, The Progress of Love, three paintings by Johannes Vermeer including Mistress and Maid, and Piero della Francesca's St. John the Evangelist.

Wednesday, May 20 – 2nd Day in NYC

Did you know that almost nowhere will let you have a drink except at the bar and unless you order food. I just wanted to sit and watch the traffic over a wine. I stopped in at quite a few places on my way back from the Whitney toward the Port Authority.

Then I walked over to Bryant Park in the big public library and neither place there would let me have just a drink either -- other than standing up at the bar. I mean really, wine started at about \$12-\$15 then add tax and tip and you think that would be enough to rent a small spot at the table? I offered to buy an appetizer but that wasn't enough either.

I decided I would go into the library but there must've been a special exhibit because there was a long line. I think the line has to do with security to get in because there is a whole hell of a lot of space inside.

On the note of security, I should give credit to the Whitney where they deserve it. They were not checking bags going in and they let us use cameras. No one even stopped me with my water bottle. Most museums have begun to act like they're being run by The Nazi Gang.

So I continued on around the Bryant Park where there was a band for entertainment going on and then went around the corner to the Grace Building where outside it is a big open bar, restaurant and disco. It is cold enough and empty enough that they let me have a table so I'm just sitting here street-side with both jacket layers on. If it were Europe they would have outside heaters. A \$20 wine but lots of eye candy going by.

I might get the 7:30pm bus back to the Arts Center which gets me home around 8:45pm. Once again I had all these big plans and I have pooped out. Or at least my feet have.

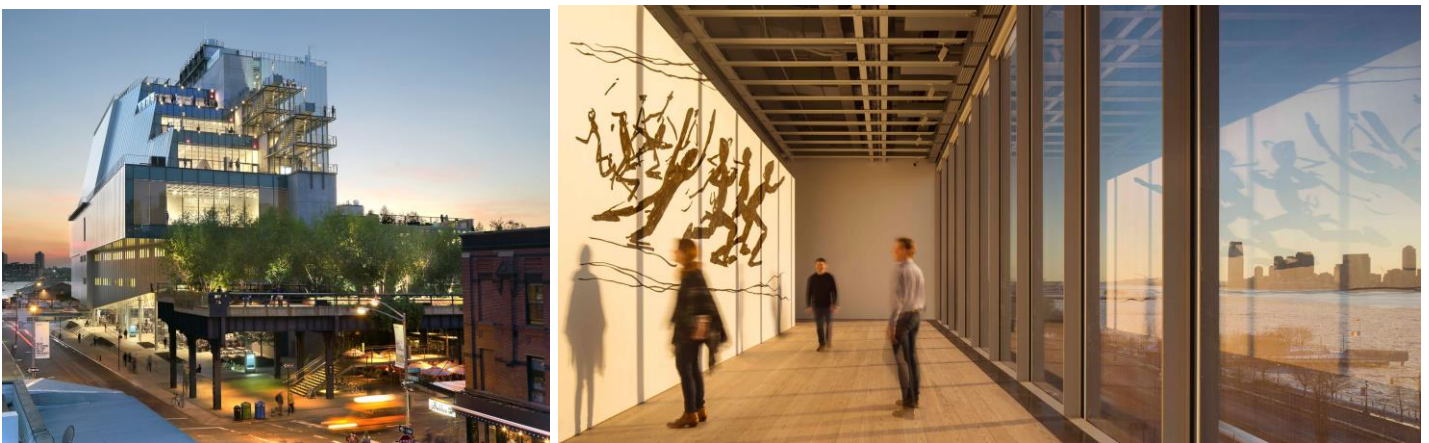
I am thinking that my next trip in a day or two will be down to the bottom of Manhattan to the Wall Street area. I have avoided it like the plague and can still get a little bit choked up but there's plenty down there other than that big hole in the ground. Marie and I had walked around Battery Park which was very pleasant and into the Winter Garden which is all like new again. (Remember that first it was bombed out in 9-11 then first Hurricane Irene and then Sandy caused huge damage. I remember avoiding the area when damn but the company sent me there for meetings and I stayed at the Millennium Hotel and wouldn't you know it but they gave me a high room looking over the hole. The hole has now grown into another huge skyscraper and at the end of the month the world's highest observation deck will open. I suspect that despite the \$32 entry ticket it will be a mob scene.

Oh, I failed to tell you where I had breakfast. I walked into a hotel and into their breakfast room and had coffee and a pastry and then walked out. I had intended to only go in long enough to get a new map (to show me where the High Line started) but the food called me.

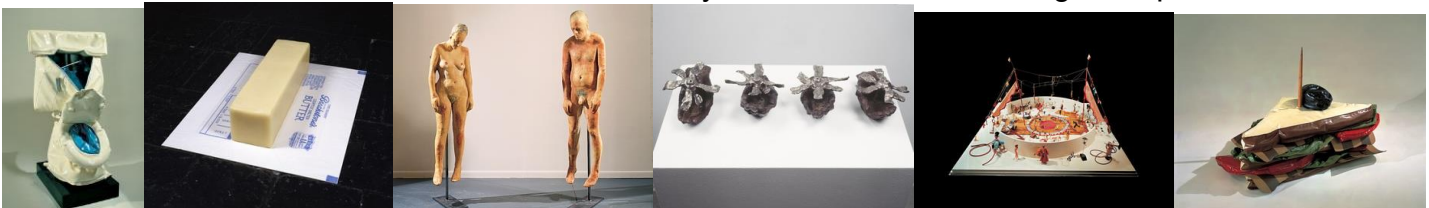
Earlier: This is my second market. First was one in the meatpacking district and now I'm quite near in Chelsea at their big covered market. Though I ate and had a wine at the Whitney Museum, some of the food stuff in Chelsea market made me hungry again. I'm currently indulging in an artichoke and other vegetables egg quiche. Samples abound to include macaroons, and full size pumpkin ravioli. I found an Amy's Bread and Pastry shop!

You know that all the art in the Whitney is American Art. Some of it I think they're really fooling themselves and whoever bought it, but since I knew I was not art educated, I took one tour on each of the floors, every hour on the hour. I also rented their audio guide and made myself go back and listen to every piece of art they discussed whether I thought it was worthy or not. So I can now say that I understand better. But I can also say that out of about five floors of artwork maybe only portions of some and one floor did I feel much appreciation for.

It's nice that you can see the entire collection at www.whitney.org.



Here are a few small shots from the collection so you don't think I'm making this up.



I've learned to appreciate Jackson Pollock and even his wife's huge and colorful work done after Pollock died. Hart Benson work gave me new understanding and I see he was born in Neoshia where

BIL Carl is now with his parents. The Japanese woodblock prints from Yosemite were stunning but this Ogata guy only qualified because he immigrated once. He returned to Japan to die and it was then that the Whitney Museum bought one of his pieces of art. The family was so impressed and honored that they donated the entire collection of 17 pieces.

I got good use of my ticket because I entered when it opened and exited when it closed. Thank heavens I pre-purchased my ticket on a timed entry because the line was about 2 to 3 blocks long to buy a ticket. They really are going to have to do something serious about crowd control because there are far too many people on each docent tour so it is hard to hear and even more difficult for people to get around. It is just jammed. The lines for the toilet were long and the lines to get the audio guide were long. I confess that I jumped the audio guide line and gave up liquids for the day.

The line for both of the restaurants was out the door so I asked and was able to take a single seat at the bar. There I sat next to a very manly looking large gal who turned out to be quite a noted artist with numerous studios and exhibits of her own and who thought that she might soon be exhibited at the Whitney. Diane is from Chicago. <http://dianeponder.com>. She has exhibited at numerous big shows around the world and was currently showing at Studio 26 Gallery in NYC.

After the calmness of the Frick Museum two days ago and now the crazy hugely-populated, lack-of-crowd-control Whitney, I must say they are quite extreme. Particularly in type of art. The buildings are quite extreme too because the Frick is in an old perfectly maintained mansion whereas the Whitney is newly designed by Piano. The Whitney has received a lot of complaints for its design, and like most American Art, it needed an explanation which helped it. On one side there are continual views of the Hudson River and the skyline and on the opposite side would be the view of New York City skyline. There are windows so you see the Statue of Liberty in all its glory. They have at least triple the amount of space as they had on Madison Avenue. But if I remember the price to build it, (\$450 million?), were I a shareholder, I would be very unhappy.

It has been a happy and exciting day and now I have 2 to 3 miles to walk back of which I will do so later.

Earlier/early morning: I got into the port authority at 9 o'clock but it took me until about 9:15 AM to find my way out. Since I don't ride very well, and the bus is full, and it rocks and rolls, then it gets stuffy, somewhere in there it gets smelly and like in airplanes when I smell the toilet chemicals I start sneezing, then eventually I get drowsy and too drowsy to find the ginger to calm my stomach, all of which means when I disembark it takes me a while to find my legs.

I walked all of the High Line which I think started around 32nd Street at 10th. It ends at the Whitney Museum. It is just lovely and so much better than the first time we walked it which might've been so long ago that it was with Joseph. There is sculpture, and there are huge numbers of lovely plantings, all cared for by a team of gardeners wearing shirts same friends of the Highline. There were giant white balloons on some trees thought to be queen in Magnolia. The wind was blowing and I got blown to smithereens so it's a good thing my hair started out clean.

I found a good food market in the meatpacking district. It is covered and a little bit European except for the people. There are armed police wandering the streets and even through the food market. I'd rather not think of why, as I do feel safe.

It would seem that all the designers and ritzy shops have either relocated or added a shop in the meatpacking district. Patagonia, Asics, Reebok, Zara, etc.

My hope was to find something to eat with egg but the crêpe place that would have done had a line so I ended up with a vegetable pizza for breakfast.

My ticket entry is for 10:30 AM.

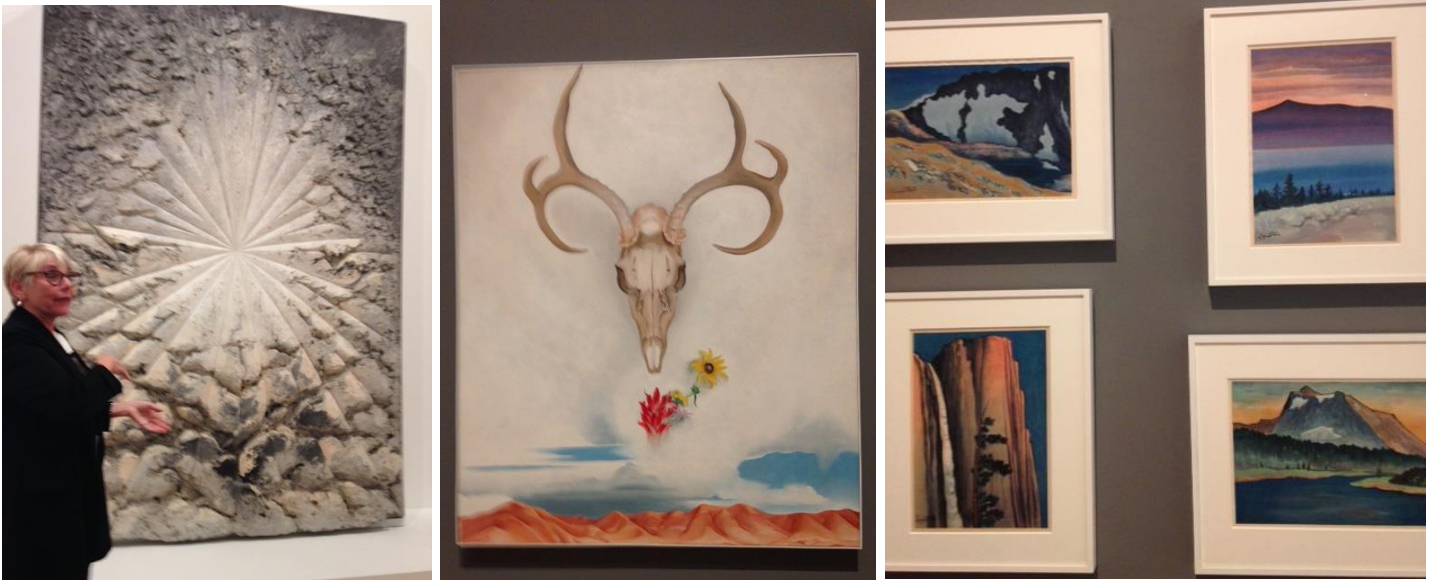
Earliest/starting out: I got the 7:55am out of The Arts Center going to the Port Authority. Hoping to find and walk the High Line Park walkway almost all the way to The Whitney Museum.



The High Line used to be an upper railway since converted, piece at a time, into this park and walkway. The plantings are lovely, there is entertainment, park benches, covered areas with restaurants and craft markets, and always a view of NYC from the Hudson River across to the Empire State Building. It started around 20th when I was last on it, and now it's from around 32nd to 14th where the Whitney Museum resides.

I recall when hotels started opening up along the High Line that they had to educate the hotel guests to close their blinds. There was lots more entertainment than anyone expected.

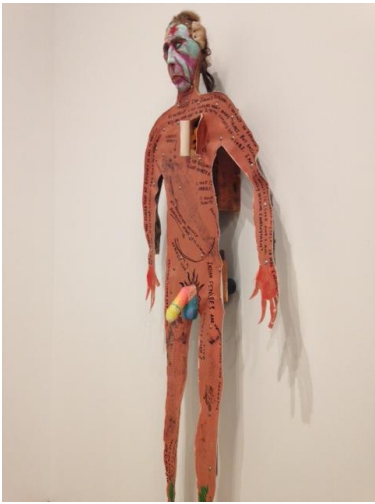
Art work along the High Line is not only on the walkway but as you can see by Albert Einstein Love Poster, it's on adjoining buildings too. See the picture of the Whitney? Those overhangs are not only lookout decks but full of sculpture too. You can see some of the line-up of folks waiting to buy tickets. One restaurant is street level, with a noted chef, and the one where I ate was on the 8th top floor with an outside deck too.



My first docent tour was by far the best and maybe as much because the crowds hadn't gotten inside yet. The docent had to modify the tour due to the numbers who showed up, as it was. The first painting or sculpture was called *The Rose* and while interesting, the story of it taking years to make, then no one purchasing it, then it deteriorating behind a wall put up to try to hold it together, then The Whitney purchasing it and spending many \$\$\$ and time restoring it – all seemed a bit much. Then there are three Georgia O'Keeffe paintings and no one can convince me that they aren't all sensual. I've worked on appreciating them The series of Japanese woodblocks I did like very much. Obata wasn't first an American but since he'd immigrated, he was eligible to be shown in The Whitney. After he returned to his homeland of Japan, The Whitney negotiated to purchase one of his woodblocks and the family immediately donated the rest of the series on Yosemite. I think there were seventeen.



When art has to be explained to be art, I double-don't-get-it. This big canvas of black was allegedly a series of black colors but many of us looked it over from both sides, from the bottom, close up, and from a distance and it was just a black canvas that somebody paid a lot of money for. Now the huge mural facing the Hudson River I did enjoy. Back to don't-get-it stuff, this hairy thing might be a spider, might be dreadlocks, and might be a farce. I listened to all the things it might be But even The Whitney isn't sure. I didn't understand the pyramid pile of TVs in a corner either. It all being entertainment, I WAS entertained, that's a given.



OK. I get it. And he was life-size too. But would I have guessed it to be art? Ugh. Outside on the streets I was pretty much as entertained. Tom and I had eaten at this restaurant where a man and his dog were looking very sophisticated at their table with food and drink in front of the both of them. Then for the max of entertainment, back in Times Square, something for all the Twits with their Narcissistic Selfie-Sticks, there is a huge photograph screen of the crowds, sometimes live, sometimes featuring someone, always causing a lot of love of seeing one's self on the big screen. Thank heavens museums are coming out with selfie-stick bans and even the Cannes film festival are calling them out as being stupid.

Next up? Maybe it wore me out, but with it being Memorial Day the crowds scared me away and I will wait until the holiday is over before venturing in again maybe to Wall Street and the 911 site but more likely to the Metropolitan Museum of Art – again.

The next day

Was it worth going? Of course! I'm in a learning mode and when they change exhibits after September 27th, and presumably aren't so NEW, I'll go again. After all, they only opened May 1 at this new location and they've had everybody there including Michelle Obama. (I hope she dressed more appropriately than what I often see.) If you want more info, here's some of my better touches of research:

Photos from the Brand New Whitney Museum | TIME
<http://time.com/3849276/whitney-museum-new-photos/>

Whitney Museum's New Building Opens Doors (And Walls) To Outside World: NPR
<http://www.npr.org/2015/05/12/406228505/whitney-museums-new-building-opens-doors-and-walls-to-outside-world>

Nine tips for dodging crowds, enjoying new Whitney Museum - LA Times
<http://www.latimes.com/travel/la-trb-whitney-museum-american-art-tips-20150515-story.html>

Brooklyn's in the house — at the new Whitney Museum | Brooklyn Daily Eagle (Note that Brooklyn just got a woman curator.)
<http://www.brooklyn eagle.com/articles/2015/5/18/brooklyn-house-%E2%80%94-new-whitney-museum>

The Whitney Museum replies to my request to withdraw a false statement - LA Times (Artists can be a temperamental lot, but this tells plenty.)

<http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/culture/la-et-cm-whitney-museum-replies-false-statement-20150514-column.html>

From www.whitney.org

The Building - Designed by architect Renzo Piano, the new building includes approximately 50,000 square feet of indoor galleries and 13,000 square feet of outdoor exhibition space and terraces facing the High Line. An expansive gallery for special exhibitions is approximately 18,000 square feet in area, making it the largest column-free museum gallery in New York City. Additional exhibition space includes a lobby gallery (accessible free of charge), two floors for the permanent collection, and a special exhibitions gallery on the top floor.

According to Mr. Piano, "The design for the new museum emerges equally from a close study of the Whitney's needs and from a response to this remarkable site. We wanted to draw on its vitality and at the same time enhance its rich character. The first big gesture, then, is the cantilevered entrance, which transforms the area outside the building into a large, sheltered public space. At this gathering place beneath the High Line, visitors will see through the building entrance and the large windows on the west side to the Hudson River beyond. Here, all at once, you have the water, the park, the powerful industrial structures and the exciting mix of people, brought together and focused by this new building and the experience of art."

The dramatically cantilevered entrance along Gansevoort Street shelters an 8,500-square-foot outdoor plaza or "largo," a public gathering space steps away from the southern entrance to the High Line. The building also includes an education center offering state-of-the-art classrooms; a multi-use black box theater for film, video, and performance with an adjacent outdoor gallery; a 170-seat theater with stunning views of the Hudson River; and a Works on Paper Study Center, Conservation Lab, and Library Reading Room. The classrooms, theater, and study center are all firsts for the Whitney.

A retail shop on the ground-floor level contributes to the busy street life of the area. A ground-floor restaurant and top-floor cafe are operated by renowned restaurateur Danny Meyer and his Union Square Hospitality Group.

Mr. Piano's design takes a strong and strikingly asymmetrical form—one that responds to the industrial character of the neighboring loft buildings and overhead railway while asserting a contemporary, sculptural presence. The upper stories of the building overlook the Hudson River on its west, and step back gracefully from the elevated High Line Park to its east.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art plans to present exhibitions and educational programming at the Whitney's uptown building for a period of eight years, with the possibility of extending the agreement for a longer term.

Wednesday, May 27 – Day 3 in New York City

Another nice day in New York City, but maybe I don't need to live here after all. After going back through the Met and re-looking at some of the beauties I'd seen far too fast in my tours, I then scurried to do a fast look at the Japanese section and then the newly remodeled Chinese Scholar's Garden. Imagine my shock to walk into the Korean and then Chinese sections to find black lights and a fashion show. A wild one at that.

I stayed until they kicked me out and then walked part of Fifth Avenue, part through the Park, and then back via The Plaza Hotel and the always mystical Bonwit Teller windows. The crowds were huge. Will we ever manage to survive the crunch of the Chinese? Did the Europeans used to say that about the Americans? I bet they did.

It was hot and I was soaked and just couldn't get enough water down me all of which meant I didn't have to hunt for a toilet stop. I did go by the new City Kitchen food court but had no desire to stand up for a happy hour glass of wine.

Catching the 7:30pm bus back to the Arts Center.

Earlier: I am sitting in the bistro or brasseries restaurant of the Metropolitan now. Of course the first thing I had was a glass of wine. But then I had their fixed menu of a very spicy carrot soup and now a salmon salad that is much like a salad Nicoise. I considered, and it was the same price, the high tea but it didn't look as healthy and I probably need all the healthy I can get.

All that wine and food was needed because I have walked down to 80th from 40th by a circuitous route to include the intrepid museum, and then I took two different guided tours of about an hour and 10 minutes each.

The first guide, and they are all volunteer Docents, gave a talk and tour of American paintings and sculpture. I really needed that after the Whitney I needed to be reassured that the Americans could paint after all. This docent was excellent and seeing full rooms of Copley and John Singer Sargent was a wonderful reminder. I hurried to the next tour which wasn't today despite being on their schedule. I had expected to explore the old masters painting but no one showed up so I went on a guided walk of the museum highlights.

The next tour I could make has just been dropped from my schedule because I decided that I have had enough of modern and contemporary art so I would just sit overlooking Central Park in the Petrie Café instead. I see the Cleopatra oblique from where I sit and a whole series of Europe in bronze nudes.

Next I plan to give myself a tour of two different wings - one being the European Robert Lehman collection. It is said to include old masters, Botticelli, El Greco, Rembrandt, Monet, Renoir, and Matisse. I have already seen the special van Gogh when I first came in.

I doubt there will be time before closing but I would like to see the Leonardo drawings.

In the morning: I read about the Gotham west market and how it had eight artesian food purveyors but I didn't realize it was part of a complex. You can rent in this building and have a 24-hour doorman, a landscaped private courtyard, an outdoor 2nd floor perch, a 32 floor sky Terrace, a business center, art galleries, and a demonstration kitchen with complementary daily breakfast, A health club and yoga studio, indoor parking, a full service bike porter, and a daily shuttle to sixth Avenue.

But I don't need an apartment - I just need a decision as to what to eat. The owner looking guy insisted I try the Torta. That is eggs with bean paste, guacamole, something like guajillo and caso fresco. Who knows, but it comes out like a sandwich and it was good and my other choice was a breakfast burrito yet I know what they are. No nothing new or fun at all.

The food all looks to be healthy and fresh and one can eat either at bars or at picnic tables. There are convenient clean restrooms and I was very pleased to see that they were communal restrooms. That is, all men and women basically together. The people around here are young, upscale without being the fifth Avenue tourist looking, or without being the upper Madison snotty acting. The place is pretty green as I see there are about six different labeled trash containers to take care of one's own. I will likely come again.

Now I'm heading towards Central Park and hopefully via a different street than my last 8th and 9th street strolls.

By the way, I reluctantly choose not to contact my friends or neighbors in the city because the joy I feel in the city is just going like a cat might go – where ever my heart desires and wherever I can suddenly find something new all on my own. An appointment for a meeting location would cost me to lose that.

Earlier: It is 9:15 AM and I'm in the USO at the Port Authority. I think we "landed" late meaning around 9 o'clock but it took me a while to get my legs. The USO has some tickets available but nothing of interest to me. So I'm heading toward the new food market that is on 11th around 44th. Then maybe onto the Metropolitan Museum of art. It all depends on this if the weather says it might have severe thunderstorms, or might not.

I figured out today that the port authority is even larger than I realized. There appears to be multiple layers where there are gates and or drop offs because this time we had about four flights of stairs to go down after being let off the bus. Remember how I told you it was so efficient in that they let us off when they can and maybe it's only a few people who can get off and then the bus continues up a little farther when there's room and let off a few more, all of which means you never know where you're going to be let off and then you not only have to find your sick stomach and your walking legs but also figure out where you are.

As I sit here in the USO, I wonder what it means that the building periodically shakes.

First: Caught the 7:45am out of PNC to the Port Authority. I just happen to get there as it was ready to leave and the driver kindly waited. I had anticipated the 7:55am. Still resistant to going to 9-11 area.



My walking isn't always via a direct route; well, in fact, it rarely is. I went over to the West Side Highway to get a view of the newly renovated Intrepid. It was probably worth going in, but I was inside a few years back so went on my way towards the Gotham West Food Court. See the multi layered elevator parking garage? This and the new tall buildings are all west of the Hell's Kitchen and all up-coming areas.

I was on my way to see changes at Lincoln Center when I noticed Columbus Circle again and decided to cool off inside the shopping center. A Tesla in candy-apple red might not cool one off but its sure cool. We were in Tom's Taurus friend's black new Tesla S just a couple days back. What a vehicle! Far too technical for my mind. Far too extravagant for my accounting. But such fun and it has so much power that it'll give you whip lash. Tom got to drive it.



When in the area, it's imperative to walk through at least some of Central Park. I remember when Alayna was a teen in the 70s and no one could think of walking in the park. Thank you Mayor Giuliani. First one, then two ponds, of many. Then his doggy critter as one of many sculptures.

The dog's name is Balto and he was the hero sled dog who has nobly stood on a rock outcropping since 1925. His statue, a big favorite in the Park, is located west of East Drive and 67th Street and north of the Zoo. Back in 1925 Nome, Alaska was stricken with a horrific diphtheria outbreak and Balto saved Alaska's children by delivering medicine over the frozen tundra...

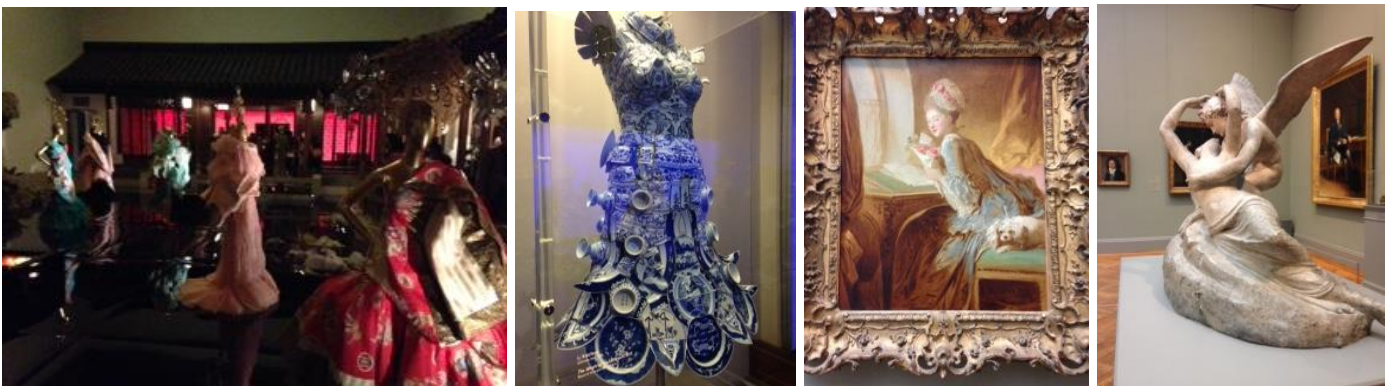


Hey, this isn't on the old 42nd street that used to have street walkers. It's the new Madison Avenue and one of the big name designers. Yet those shoes do look like they belong on a street walker. Madame X painting is NOT a street walker but when the painting was first shown, that's what they said. Too much skin and the artist was required to pull the strap up on the evening gown, and the Met was required to not name the well-known noble lady and thus she became Madame X. As much as I like the John Singer Sergeants, I loved these Iris too.

The sculpture is huge and is in the Italian sculpture hall. It's a well-known one by Bernini and I've been engaged in a big, slow, tedious text book about Bernini, as well as Kahn Academy studies, in preparation for my November trip to Rome with artist friend Nola.



I should have started in the Asian wing so maybe I'll go back. Strikingly they have added black lights and huge odd sculpture and then costumes by famous designers. Those are very tall shoes of at least ten inches, and they go with the dress.



I was committed to see the renovations to the Chinese Scholar's Garden but what did I find but more black lights, more costumes filling the courtyard, and all set on mirrored glass like a lake. In adjoining rooms were many costumes with the most-weird one being these porcelain plates.

Take me back fast to the traditional stuff! This lovely with her little puppy is by Fragonard where I'd just seen a whole room full a few days ago. Then the huge sculpture is a copy of one I saw at Lake Como, with the original being in the Hermitage.

The Van Gogh exhibit: There was a special of his paintings reminding us that to use good paint was important because his reds faded. I didn't take any of the pictures as they were very washed out irises and roses. Here is from the Met site.





Back to and speaking of Bernini, one reason for returning to Rome is to finally get into the Borghese Gallery. Old Cardinal Borghese was a bad man but he was a good man for hiring so much great sculpture and he was a patron of Bernini. I hope that's all he was to Bernini because he was famous for liking little boys, many times to their detriment. He, like so many of the Cardinals, spent wads of money but fortunately some of those criminal expenditures didn't appear criminal to the Catholics of the day and many of the art pieces remain.

I hope Rembrandt wasn't a bad man. Here's one of his self-portraits and very much like one I saw in the Frick Museum. Don't you love the hat? And Reuben's. If he was bad, I don't want to know it. I always smile at his paintings. A huge one in the Frick was hard to pull away from.



Now here's a Count but he chose to be an Artist instead – much to our delight. Toulouse Lautrec wasn't exactly bad but he worked on it. Maybe because of his tiny frail diseased legs, he felt a need to use what he had to good use . . . He was known to have bedded most of the prostitutes of the area in his day and there were rumored to be about 5,000. Could that really be possible? He claimed his father footed all his bills out of guilt for his son's disease.

I like the 2,500 year old sculpture for a few reasons. He is full size (though not in good proportion) and he is all in one piece and amazingly balanced. He is from Greece and that's where Phidippides was from when he made a name for himself when he ran the first long run from Marathon to Athens 2,500 years ago. And then allegedly keeled over and died which story probably isn't true. I got to run the Athens Marathon in 2012 in honor of his run 2,500 years ago, so I name this sculpture Phidippides.

And at about this time in my day's life at the Met, they shooed me out and closed up.



Fakes? The museum world is full of them. Get a load of this and/or read the book about all the fake Vermeer where even curators and specialists believed and built museums just for them! Can You Spot The Fake Fragonard? From NPR <http://www.npr.org/2015/05/02/403623782/can-you-spot-the-fake-fragonard>

Saturday, May 30 – Day 4 in NJ's Hartshorne Woods

These woods are my favorite hike and so enjoyable that I can go on a 3-hour loop without ever tiring of the scenery. It is most diverse, with views of the River and also of the Ocean sometimes across to New York. It is near to the highest point on the Eastern Seaboard – Eastpointe. On my loop there are very few flat areas, many roots, stones and even some sections with heavy sand. At least two of the hills have never been within my ability to get up without a resting stop.

From the web: A hilly, forested 787-acre site overlooking the Navesink River, this park is among the highest elevations along the Atlantic Coast and features prominently in area history as a former coastal defense site. Known for its challenging trail system and scenic views, Hartshorne Woods is a popular park for area hikers, bicyclists and outdoor enthusiasts.

Park features: group cabin camping (by reservation), cross country ski trails, fishing in the Navesink River and trails for walking, hiking, biking, and horseback riding. It's the perfect place to escape the sounds of suburbia.

History - The Park is named after Richard Hartshorne an English Quaker from London who settled here in 1669 and acquired more than 2,300 acres of land. By the early 1880s, some of the land was sold to private individuals and the U.S. government, but large portions remained in Hartshorne family ownership. The Park System acquired the first 660 acres of this park in 1974. Additional land was conveyed from the government in 1984, and subsequent purchases – including the 44-acre Claypit Creek section in 2005- brought the park to its current size.

Military Installations at Rocky Point 1940's - The Hartshorne property was a desirable defense site because of its high elevation. Through the years, it hosted a number of different land and air-based military installations to defend New York Harbor and surrounding areas. During the WWII era, batteries for heavy artillery were built on this site to modernize coastal defense efforts. These concrete and earth encasements or bunkers – considered “bomb-proof” at the time – protected personnel and equipment. These structures can still be viewed today. With the rise of strategic air power and nuclear weapons, the reliance on artillery guns for coastal defense ended. During the Cold War Era, from the 1950s-1970s, the site served as a missile defense site and command center with radar, computers and electronic plotting devices. Structures from this era have all been removed.

Trails - Hartshorne Woods Park has the most extensive and challenging series of trails (over 14 miles) in the Park System. Hardy hikers, bicyclists, and casual walkers can all find trails to their liking.





Before I started running, I would attend a Hartshorne Trail Run which was comfortable with walkers. It was here that I met the running club folks and joined. We had a 7.2 mile run that I've basically retained, dropping off the pavement section and adding the Rocky Point Trail. The initial stretch takes me 30 minutes and is my least favorite, partly for the need to warm up to make the hills, but also because it is the most boring stretch (see first picture.) Now we have blooming rhododendron and many different white flowers so I was entertained as I huffed and-puffed.

I credit my switch to dirt and trails to keeping sufficiently fit and without injury. These trails give me a bit of all kinds of surface. I'm pleased to have given up the asphalt and concrete of roads.



Here's an example of the step stairs of roots. Then comes another series of water views, this the river with Sunday recreational boats and kayaks. Also another porta potty back in the trees – there is one available about every 30-minutes of my 3-hour hike.



A big treat is seeing the blossoms and then little fuzzy balls representing the raspberries and blackberries soon to come. I calendar July 4th weekend to go pick and eat until I'm near ill. More and more rhododendron and nice shady trails that give at least ten degrees cooler from the shade and the breezes of the river and ocean. Last hill and last stretch in to home and a refill at the water well.

And on that, I should say goodnight. Here's a photo from out my office window at night.

I'm trying for another trip into NYC on Wednesday and maybe for the Met again as I still can't think of wanting to see the 9-11 area yet. But surely readers are tired of my tourist chatter.

