I2B  Extracurriculars
Events on and off campus in January and February

I2D  Nigerian Women Speak Out
A.R.T. hosts “HEAR WORD!”

I2F  Tastemakers
Exploring the Museum of Bad Art, in Somerville

I2H  A Wintry Jaunt to Newport, Rhode Island
Experience the city’s elemental beauty, art, history, and food—without the crowds

I2L  Chinatown Chow
Shōjō’s Asian-fusion tapas with a Western kick
Extracurriculars
Events on and off campus during January and February

EXHIBITIONS & EVENTS
Houghton Library
www.houghton75.org
Rethinking Enlightenment: Forgotten Women Writers of Eighteenth Century France includes Olympe de Gouges, author of the “Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen,” and Émilie du Châtelet, translator of Isaac Newton’s Principia. (Opens January 5)
Landmarks: Maps as Literary Illustration features more than 60 documents depicting imagined places, from Thomas More’s Utopia to the Stillness supercontinent in N.K. Jemisin’s The Fifth Season. (Opens January 16)
Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts
https://carpenter.center
Artist, writer, and filmmaker Renée Green’s two-year residency—spent exploring perceptions of time, space, and place—culminates with a display of video installations and screen prints. (Opens February 1)

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NATURE AND SCIENCE
The Arnold Arboretum

www.arboretum.harvard.edu

Arboretum director William Friedman addresses the nuanced evolutionary ties between plants and the origins of human life in Replaying Life’s Tape Through the Lens of Plants. (January 22)

Close and Closer: Photographs of the Arnold Arboretum by James Reis reveals studied layers of the wondrous landscape. (Opens February 9)

Events listings are also found at www.harvardmagazine.com.

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FILM
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www.hcl.harvard.edu/hfa

Norton Lectures in Cinema: Frederick Wiseman. The retrospective includes Titicut Follies, Primate, High School, and Near Death, a six-hour chronicle of the medical intensive care unit at Boston’s Beth Israel Hospital. (January 19-February 18)

Kevin Jerome Everson—Cinema and the Practice of Everyday Life. The artist rebukes mainstream cinema’s pat cultural depictions and insistence on action and melodrama. Screenings include: Tonster Park, Ene, Company Line, Ninety-Three, and Ears, Nose, and Throat. (February 21)

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HARVARD SQUARED

Pioneering new-media artist and filmmaker Lynn Hershman Leeson—known for exploring privacy, identity, and human relationships with machines in the context of the digital age—discusses her work. (February 8) The lecture occurs in conjunction with Art in the Age of the Internet: 1989 to Today, opening at the Institute of Contemporary Art on February 7.

HarvardArt Museums

www.harvardartmuseums.org

Inventures—Art in Germany, 1943-55 highlights more than 170 works, many never before shown outside Germany, that were created during a time of collective cultural reckoning. (Opens February 9)

Harvard Museum of Natural History

www.hmnh.harvard.edu

Microbial Life: A Universe at the Edge of Sight takes visitors on a multimedia journey from a typical kitchen countertop into the fascinating lives of earth’s first inhabitants. (Opens February 17)

Rose Art Museum

www.brandeis.edu/rose

The exhibit features two dozen works by the New York-based artist Joe Bradley, from impromptu drawings to bold, layered abstract paintings. (Opens January 26-February 11)

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This winter, an exhibit of contemporary paintings in the basement of Davis Square’s Somerville Theatre features animals: Midas the Frisbee Fish by Florida artist Christine House. There is a certain symbolic—out of what? A wild-haired lass in a slinky red dress stands with arms extended like pale noodles, bewitching the 1980 film Riding Crustacean. Nearby is the evocative acrylic enchantress is herself transfixed by a mysterious squiggled spiral in the twilight sky. It all began in 1994 with a donation by local artist Mike “Reilly” to the Museum of Bad Art (MOBA). “We collect compelling pieces that simply elicit a loud ‘Wow, what is that?’” Frank said, mostly because they’ve seen their expertise painstakingly applied to produce hilariously overwrought results, or images that are so bad they’re funny. Frank is picky. He accepts less than 25 percent of what’s offered by others, and acquires most of the pieces himself through the region’s thrift shops and other affordable venues. Garbage piles in May and June, when local college students are preparing to leave town, have yielded some odd treasures. He also scours around when traveling for his paid occupation, as a gig guitarist and as family entertainer Mike the Hatman. “I’ve been to Cuba a lot, and there’s a strong strain of surreal imagery there,” he said in a phone interview from his Boston living room. “So I recently picked up a piece; that I’m looking at here now; that’s pretty damn bizarre.”

He guesses it’s some sort of Welsh corgi, with no legs to speak of, in a rural landscape. A backdrop of artwork awaits cataloging and what can be his lengthy interpretation process. That might involve Google name searches for any signed pieces (although most MOBA works are by unknown artists), as well as research to contextualize a given painting by identifying other art or events that might have inspired the work. Thus Miss Marilyn En Poirot, in a show entitled “Doppel-hangers” at the Weymouth gallery, is a depiction of the American actress Ingrid Bergman: a “study for a larger, more permanent gallery in the Somerville Theatre, itself an historic, and beloved, place; saturated we had to do something bigger.” Eventually they opened MOBA’s more sophisticated space atop a giant lobster. It’s a multi-museum event in a show entitled “Lucy in the Field with Flowers.”

People from all over the world submit photos of potential works, and sometimes just mail the works themselves to MOBA. Frank said, mostly because they’ve seen its Facebook page (which has 53,000 followers) or appreciate Frank’s 28 curatorial talks (of various educational and entertainment value) on YouTube. Frank is picky. He accepts less than 25 percent of what’s offered by others, and acquires most of the pieces himself through the region’s thrift shops and other affordable venues. Garbage piles in May and June, when local college students are preparing to leave town, have yielded some odd treasures. He also scours around when traveling for his paid occupation, as a gig guitarist and as family entertainer Mike the Hatman. “I’ve been to Cuba a lot, and there’s a strong strain of surreal imagery there,” he said in a phone interview from his Boston living room. “So I recently picked up a piece; that I’m looking at here now; that’s pretty damn bizarre.”

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and sex symbol. But what may initially resemble pigs’ feet poking out from under her black dress are actually her own, attached to unseen knees bent as she’s jumping up, smiling at the viewer. Frank knows this because the painting is clearly based on an image he found online by French photographer Philippe Halman, who, in the 1990s, captured a series of famous people in mid air.

Over the years, MOBA has had shows in New York City, Santa Fe, and Minneapolis, as well as in Canada and Taiwan. “It was not my assumption that the irony of MOBA would translate” to Asia, Frank said, “but it seemed to be very successful, because the show was in Taipei and then moved to another city and was extended to six weeks.” He’s currently planning for a MOBA show in Tokyo next fall or winter.

MOBA’s art is primarily representational. With abstract works, Sacco said, it’s much harder to assess what artists intended to do, and if they succeeded. “To look at a Jackson Pollock—if that reputation wasn’t out there, if he wasn’t a well-acknowledged genius—the first time we saw his painting, we’d say, ‘Oh, someone spilled the paint—that’s what went wrong.”

What’s often disconcerting in the MOBA collection is the steroidal level of symbolism. The exhibit “MOBA Zoo” features a 24-inch canvas titled Liberty and Justice that was donated in 2015. Frank’s label reads: “Reminiscence of Judith clutching the head of Holofernes, teary-eyed Lady Liberty celebrates her vici-
MOBA collection. In landscapes, waterfalls it or you don't.

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**TASTES & TABLES: Pork Bao and Bubble Waffles**

**Chinatown’s hip Shōjō** serves addictive Asian-fusion tapas with a quirky Western twist. Japanese sweet-potato tots are dipped in miso tare aioli ($8). Chicken and Hong Kong bubble waffles (a popular street-food item) come slathered with five-spice butter ($16). And the resident hamburger, the “Shōjōnator,” is housed in a steamed bao-style bun and topped with smoked bacon and “kimcheese.” Shōjō is best known for its baos—pork, shrimp, and vegetarian versions—with a rich BBQ sauce, and a singularly delicious chili-cheese mess the kitchen calls “shadowless” duck-fat, hand-cut fries ($11).

Fresh juices and stylized cocktails complement any dish—try The Loneliest Monk (aged rum, Frangelico, pineapple, and lime juices; $12). Shōjō also offers fine Japanese spirits and a crazy-long list of pricey whiskeys. People come to have fun. The place is run by a young generation of longtime Chinatown restaurateurs: the team’s also responsible for the ramen shop Ruckus (as in the Wu-Tang Clan song, “Bring Da Ruckus”) next door, and the revamped BLR by Shōjō. All have helped revive Chinatown’s reputation among a hip, young crowd. “Shōjō’s a place to bring a fun parent,” one 20-something patron said, “not like my parents.” (Although anyone of any age averse to a loud, typically hip-hop, soundtrack is forewarned.)

Japanese for school-aged girl, shōjō is also a reference to shojo manga, the comic books and magazines targeting that demographic—as the restaurant’s graffiti-styled wall graphics, murals with warriors, dragons, mystical mountains, and other anime décor attest. Just how that theme links to the menu is not so clear, but, when distracted by friends, drinks, pounding music, and that first bite into a freshly steamed pork bao (at left), it doesn’t seem to matter. ～N.P.B.