



San Francisco: Like a Local

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Alexander the Great is on loan to the Museum of the African Diaspora.

CULTURE

YERBA BUENA

A heady mix of past and present fills the [Museum of the African Diaspora](#), which reopened in Yerba Buena in 2014 after considerable renovations and a new affiliation with the Smithsonian Institution. “We give a historical perspective to the original migrations out of Africa,” says Executive Director Linda Harrison, “and an important part of our mission is using art as a lens to see how the diaspora continues to evolve.”

The museum mainly showcases exhibits culled from other collections. Previous displays have examined such diverse topics as Afro-Cuban art of the 1970s and '80s, and patchwork quilts by Siddis, an Indian people of African descent. The current show, *Portraits and Other*

Likenesses from [SFMOMA](#) (on view until October 11), includes such powerful works as Sargent Johnson's *Forever Free*. The wood-and-paint sculpture of an African American woman and her children compels you to take a long look.

So does Yerba Buena itself, one of the most dynamic arts districts in the West. Even with the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art on hiatus until 2016—when it debuts a sleek 10-story wing—the variety and depth of the area's offerings make it a must-visit destination.

The [Contemporary Jewish Museum](#) presents viewpoints on Jewish history, culture, and art. Housed in architect Daniel Libeskind's surreal creation—a luminous blue-steel cube jutting from a 1907 brick building—the museum has no permanent exhibits but mounts innovative, changing shows. The personal effects of the late English singersongwriter Amy Winehouse and works of art responding to her meteoric rise and fall are on view until November 1.

At [Yerba Buena Center for the Arts](#) you can see films and peruse visual arts, often in the form of contemporary installations. The center also presents live performances, which may feature Balinese music or top modern dance troupes such as the Paul Taylor Dance Company.

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