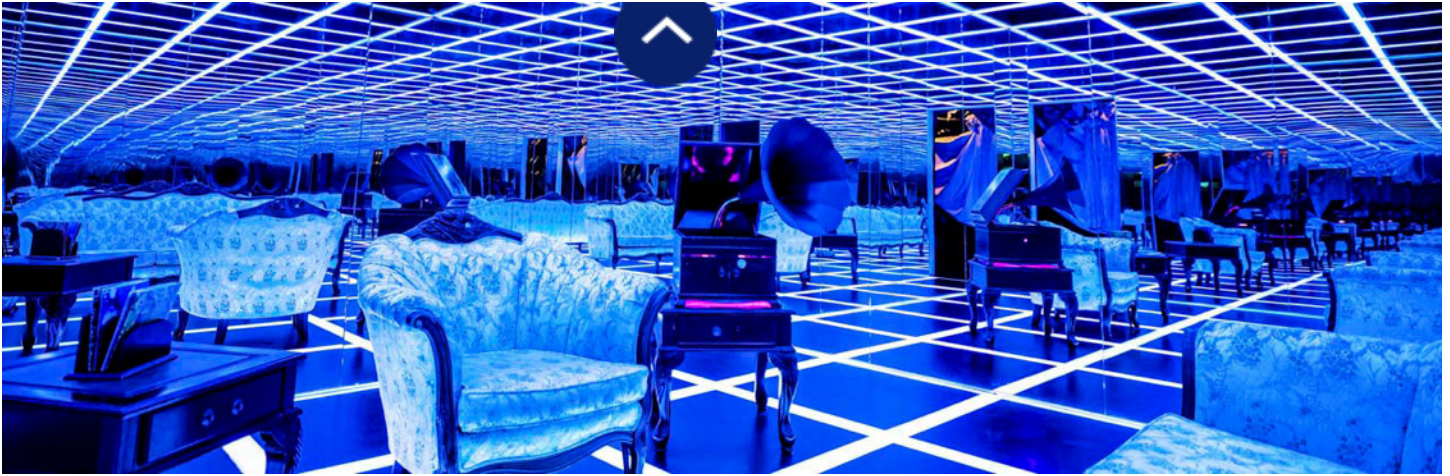


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AAA Magazines

6 mind-bending immersive art experiences around the U.S.





"Otherworld" encompasses nearly 50 rooms and secret passageways, including this interactive room that changes as visitors play different music on the record player. Photo by @CatieViox

By Saryn Chorney

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Whether you call it immersive, interactive, or experiential, a compelling new kind of art experience has exploded in recent years. Far beyond featuring only paintings on walls, a growing number of art venues combine audiovisual elements, technology, nature, historic landmarks, and other sensory features to create next-level exhibits and fun houses. To sample such an exhibit, check out one of these intriguing venues around the country.

1. *Otherworld* in Columbus, Ohio



Otherworld encompasses nearly 50 rooms and secret passageways in Columbus, Ohio. Photo by @CatieViox

Blending technology, interactive art, and collaboration, ***Otherworld*** is a mixed media, multi-reality playground offering puzzles, fuzzy monsters, and extended reality experiences (virtual and augmented) housed within 47 rooms and secret passageways.

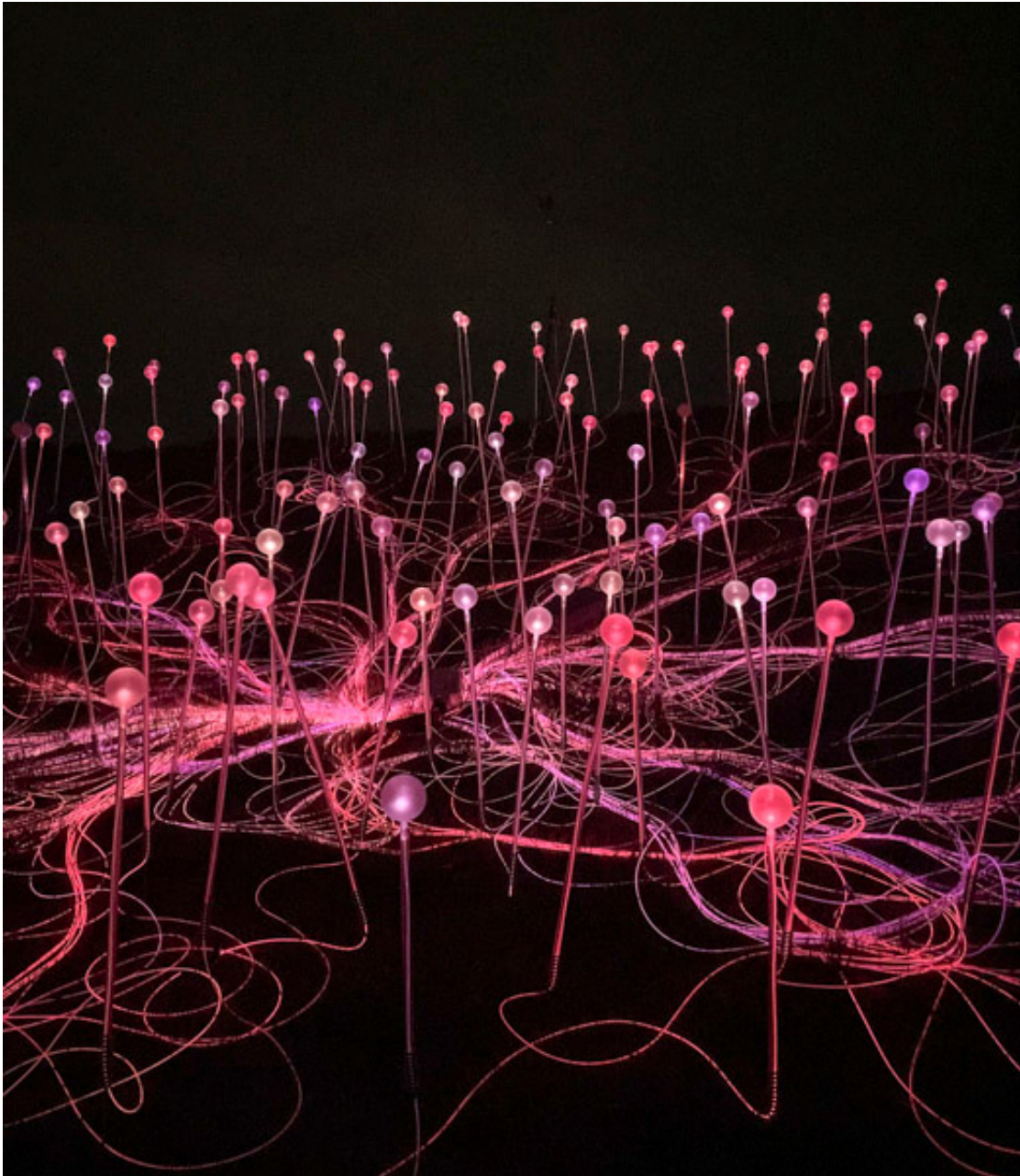


The *Otherworld* experience includes this infinity room. Photo by @Seansimmers

Created by more than 40 artists—including installation and visual artists, fabricators, technologists, and muralists—the exhibits appeal to kids and adults alike and encourage guests to engage with their surroundings, search for hidden clues, and solve mini-mysteries. *Otherworld* continues to evolve as new rooms and exhibits develop. Two new rooms are expected to open in 2023. Another *Otherworld* is in the works in Philadelphia. Adult admission, \$30.

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2. *Light at Sensorio* in Paso Robles, California



Light at Sensorio features more than 100,000 stemmed spheres. Photo by Jen Warren

The Central California town of Paso Robles was already drawing legions of visitors thanks to its hot food-and-wine scene, but an ethereal walk-through light installation has made visiting the area more compelling than ever. Designed by renowned artist Bruce Munro, ***Light at Sensorio*** features 100,000 stemmed spheres lit by fiber-optics that change color and illuminate 15 rolling acres. A separate Light Towers exhibit has 69 illuminated towers.

Visitors who want the full experience should arrive before sunset to watch darkness fall and the thousands of lights come to life. Guests can stroll the pathways, which are ADA compliant, to take in the spectacle from a range of viewpoints. Sensorio recently opened Mercado Sensorio, which offers wines, beers, cocktails, hot and cold beverages, small bites, burgers, and desserts. The attraction also regularly features live music. Adult admission starts at \$43.

You may also like: [7 enchanting places to see holiday lights in Southern California](#)

3. Laurie Anderson at Mass MoCA in North Adams, Massachusetts



To the Moon. Photo by Laurie Anderson and Hsin-Chien Huang

This expansive exhibit at Mass MoCA showcases seminal artist **Laurie Anderson's** innovative and pioneering forays into music, performance art, poetry, and multimedia. Featuring a number of galleries and installations, the exhibit offers insight into Anderson's creative process and vast body of work.



Chalkroom. Photo by Zoran Orlic

A virtual-reality space features two immersive works, *To the Moon* and *Chalkroom*, co-created with artist Hsin-Chien Huang. Anderson's recent work *Scroll* is also on display. It's a kind of AI bible made in collaboration with the Art Intelligence Agency and the Australian Institute for Machine Learning. Exploring themes related to human connection, culture, and technology, Anderson's exhibits experiment with interactive storytelling to immerse viewers in an avant-garde virtual world.

Note: Kids must be 10 or older to experience the exhibit's VR elements. Adult admission to Mass MoCA, \$20.

You may also like: [Honolulu's bold, brash Pow! Wow! street-mural festival](#)

4. *Before Yesterday We Could Fly* at The Met in New York City



Photo courtesy The Metropolitan Museum of Art

This **intricate “period room”** at The Met imagines a present and future home for descendants of the residents of Seneca Village, a predominantly Black community that thrived in what is now Central Park in the mid-19th century. The installation is rooted in history yet connects viewers to the modern-day Black experience through Afrofuturism, an artistic concept that aims to exalt and inspire via imagination and self-determination.

The Met's curatorial team, led by Hannah Beachler, has crafted an immersive space that celebrates the culture and heritage of this historic Black community and their descendants across generations.



Before Yesterday We Could Fly at The Met in New York City. Photo courtesy The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Visitors surround the freestanding house and peer in through cutouts in the facade to see both historical and contemporary artworks and objects. The domestic space

is unfamiliar, yet intimately connected to the past, present, and future. Through active looking, physical exploration, listening, and video watching, *Before Yesterday* might inspire reflections on time, loss, community, and resiliency, as well as social justice, equality, and hope. Adult admission to The Met, \$30.

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5. Tinworks Art in Bozeman, Montana



One of the pieces exhibited at Tinworks Art in Bozeman, Montana is Suzanne Kite's 'Tho Win (Blue Woman) #1. Photo by Suzanne Kite

Montana's grasslands might not come immediately to mind when thinking about contemporary art. However, for the past 4 years, **Tinworks Art**, housed in a former sheet-metal manufacturing warehouse complex, has showcased exceptional art in a nontraditional space. The center's latest group of installations, "Invisible Prairie," offers an opportunity to connect your senses with the American West's beauty,

fragility, and mystery.

The show, which runs through Oct. 14, 2023, features 7 diverse artists, each focused on a different type of prairie experience. In poetry, murals, film, and video, the exhibition encourages visitors to immerse themselves in the landscape and to consider the act of speaking and listening, including in relation to Lakota tribal storytelling.

If an intimate art experience that encourages meditation, contemplation, and paying close attention to the natural environment calls to you, see this quietly thought-provoking show about life on the prairie. Admission is free.

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6. Meow Wolf Grapevine in Grapevine, Texas

Begun in 2008 as a cutting-edge artist collective, **Meow Wolf** opened its first immersive entertainment complex in Santa Fe in 2016 and has been expanding ever since. Its fourth location opened in July 2023 in Grapevine, Texas. Housed in a former Bed, Bath & Beyond, Meow Wolf Grapevine was designed to be a spiritual sequel to the original Santa Fe location's *House of Eternal Return*.

You'll search a maze of rooms for clues about the origins of the complete Meow Wolf universe, venturing through mysterious and whimsical portals. You might even find an impromptu dance party. Artists such as Tsz Kam, Dan Lam, and Carlos Donjuan have created colorful chimeras, drippy psychedelia, and "popsicle art" in rooms that, when woven together, tell a cosmic adventure story. Adult admission starts at \$45.

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