

## Roz Chast's *Museumland*

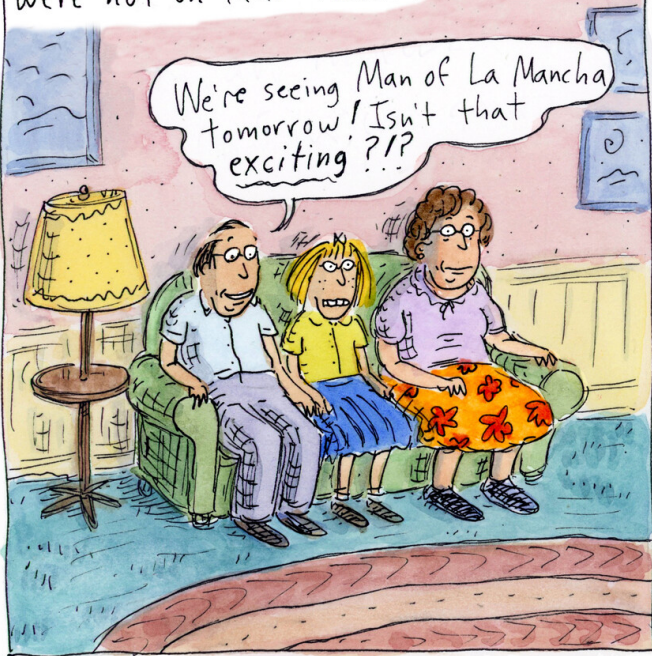
A cartoonist pines for museums during lockdown.

Roz Chast  
Mar 24, 2021

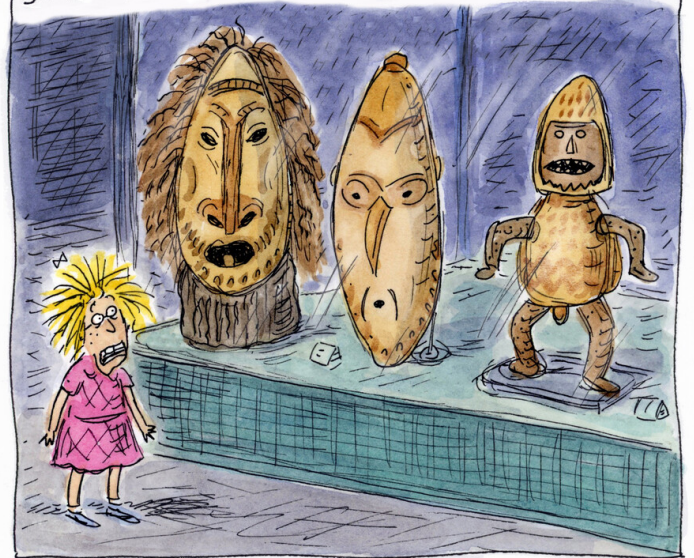
"I'm curious about how other people make pictures," says longtime *New Yorker* cartoonist Roz Chast, whose story details her love of museums during the pandemic. Though she is best known for her satirical drawings, she is no stranger to working in the autobiographical mode. In 2014, her graphic memoir about her parents' final years, *Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?*, won the the National Book Critic Circle Award for Autobiography and was a finalist for the National Book Award. An avid museum-goer, Chast readily admits to stealing: "But never a whole style—that would be sad and weird. For better or worse, probably worse, I am who I am. It's more like: nice wallpaper pattern. I can use that."

# Museumland

My parents loved going to concerts and plays in the city, but art museums were not on their radar.



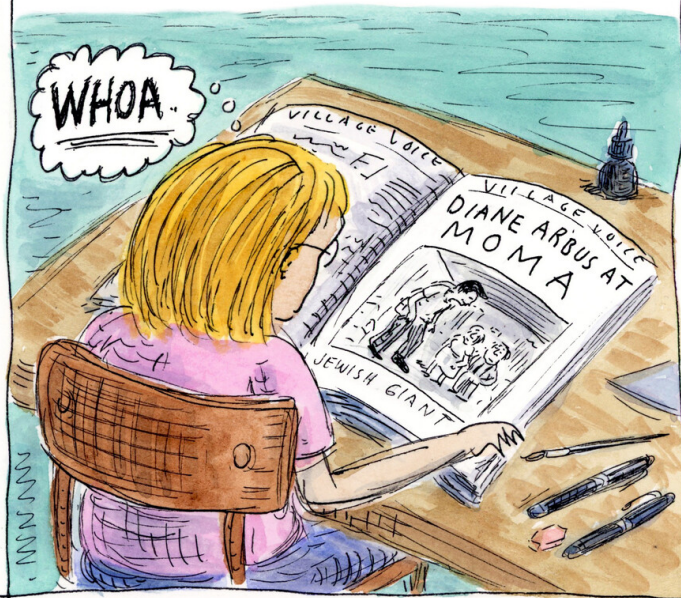
The exception was the Brooklyn Museum, which we visited frequently. I mostly remember a large, dimly lit room filled with masks and statues from islands in the South Pacific which scared but fascinated me.



The first painting I ever saw that got my attention was Paul Klee's "Around the Fish" \* which I didn't see in a museum. A print of it hung on the wall of my pediatrician's waiting room. I wondered about it for years.



When I got older, I started to go into the city to see stuff at museums. I didn't just like to make pictures - I also liked to look at pictures.



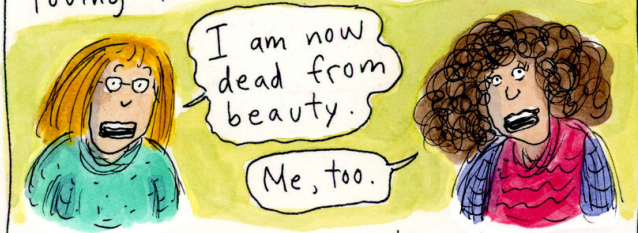
Going to museums was a great way to learn about art, and it was a great way to learn how to get around the city by subway, which for a city kid, is like learning how to drive. (This was, of course, way before the Internet.)



But enough of this "trip down memory lane" folderol!!!!!!



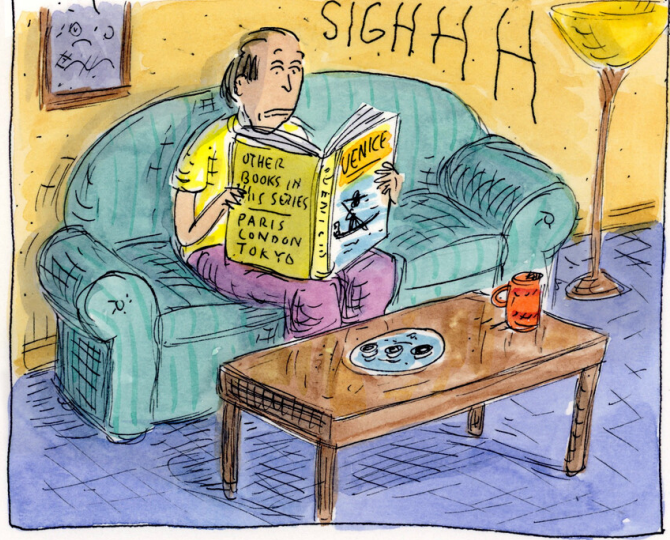
Museums are still the greatest. I love going with a fellow-museum-lover. There's the pleasure of loving the same thing...



...and the slightly guilty pleasure of detesting the same thing.



This past year has been a washout, museum-wise. I look at things online and in books, but it's not the same. It's like looking at postcards of a place instead of traveling.





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Roz Chast is a longtime cartoonist for the *New Yorker*. In 2014, her graphic memoir about her parents' last years, *Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?*, won the Kirkus Prize, the National Book Critic Circle Award for Autobiography, and was a finalist for the National Book Award. She has illustrated many children's books and humor books, and her work has been compiled in several cartoon collections.