

ART *In America*

Tour America's Outdoor Art and Architecture

(NAPSA)—If you're looking to tour some of the country's most alluring outdoor art and architecture, once the private passions of creative genius and substantial wealth, you might want to visit the Valley Forge area and Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

At Berman Museum of Art at Ursinus College, more than 4,000 pieces of art are displayed inside, but benefactors Philip and Muriel Berman's love of contemporary sculpture is responsible for the extensive outdoor collection now dotting the Collegetown campus.

The architecture of Wharton Esherick Studio, atop Valley Forge Mountain, illustrates this renowned craftsman's changing style over 40 years: Arts and Crafts to German Expressionism to the free-form shapes of Modernism. It is considered his autobiography in wood.

The same could be said of Pittsburgh Plate Glass heir Raymond Pitcairn and the exquisite wood, stone, glass and mosaics of Glencairn in Bryn Athyn. Pitcairn, with no formal training and the help of more than 100 craftsmen, painstakingly created this 90-room medieval Romanesque-style structure as a home for his family and to showcase, in scale, his unprecedented collection of medieval art, sculpture and stained glass.

At the Gothic Revival-style Washington Memorial Chapel in Valley Forge National Historical Park, stained glass windows depict Christ and, aptly, America's first president. The church was designed in 1903 to pay homage to General Washington, his struggles during the American Revolution and his great faith in God. It was completed in 1913 and features exquisite wood carvings and wrought iron accents by artisans Edward Maene and Samuel Yellin.



Photo credit: Scott Mabry
Courtesy of Valley Forge Convention and Visitors Bureau

Outdoor sculpture at Berman Museum of Art is in southeastern Pennsylvania.

Grey Towers, at Arcadia University in Glenside, is reminiscent of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Once the home of sugar magnate William Welsh Harrison, it was modeled after Alnwick Castle, the medieval seat of the Dukes of Northumberland in England, and the setting for the first two Harry Potter films.

But at the 20-acre sculpture garden at Abington Art Center, in Jenkintown, the setting is the canvas for nationally recognized contemporary artists. Most of them install their work incorporating the terrain.

Like Sylvia Benitez, who, during a monthlong residency, was inspired by bamboo growing on-site and thought to suspend poles from a fallen tree lodged in the fork of a living one. She did so to create a dangling triangular screen evocative of the female pharaoh Hatshepsut's curtain of black hair.

For more information about the abundant art and architecture in the Valley Forge area and Montgomery County, as well as affordable overnight accommodations, visit www.valleyforge.org.