

DC THEATER ARTS

(<https://dctheaterarts.org/>)

Rollicking 'Museum' spoofs art world at Anne Arundel Community College

The actors hit all the right comic moments in Tina Howe's play, which pokes great fun at the eccentricities of art and art-goers.

By **Charles Green** (<https://dctheaterarts.org/author/charles-green/>) - April 12, 2025

AACC Theater's production of *Museum* is a rollicking fun time. Tina Howe's 1976 play features the quirky visitors to an exhibit of three artists on the last day of display, with a guard trying to maintain order. Directed by Atticus Cooper Boidy, it is full of laughs.

James Reed Estepp plays the Guard with comic exasperation. In between keeping visitors from touching the art, especially the clothespins in one section, escorting several guests out, and trying to corral one wildly unpredictable guest, he collapses onto his stool, hoping the day will pass quickly. Cameron Ashley plays Michael with a quiet curiosity, photographing both the arts and fellow visitors' hijinks. Zaura Denton plays Fred with eagerness, rushing back and forth to get permission to photograph the art, and reading aloud from the informational plaques.



Amanda Matousek, Aryana Chamberlain, Ray Jung, and Meridian Toalepai in 'Museum.' Photo by Ken Harriford.

All other actors play multiple roles. Olivia Comeau brings an enthusiasm to Liz, explaining to her friends that one of the artists was raised with deaf-mute parents and wondering what it meant when, as a baby, he would cry, and they could not hear him. Meridian Toalepai brings an eccentricity to Carol, who judges museums by the views from their windows and dreams of creating a museum with only windows, all different types. Nyla Waskiewicz brings joy to Blakey, so enthralled by one exhibit that she nearly lies down on it.

Ray Jung plays Francoise with complete seriousness, engaging in a conversation in French with a puppet bat, who then angrily confronts the guard on a correction in the catalog. Jana Naylor brings an enchantment to Annette, speaking to one guest about the artists before all the others follow her around the exhibits, eagerly absorbing her knowledge. Cameron Walker has perfect timing as a man wincing from a too-loud self-guided tour cassette. As Giorgio, he is excited by one of the pieces, almost sniffing it, before expounding on its meaning.

Dylan Klebahn brings a pretentiousness to Will, critiquing all aspects of the exhibit with wordplay. As one of the artists, he makes changes to the exhibit in silence, while the other

guests watch him in awe. Robin Whewell plays Bob with great thought, growing increasingly concerned about the lack of a future for museums and art, shaking Will's shoulders and shouting, "Something must be done!" They play Bill with boredom at first, putting away a catalog before excitedly hearing about one of the artist's strange habits.



TOP: Meridian Toalepai and James Reed Estep; ABOVE: Amanda Matousek, Dylan Klebahn, Robin Whewell, Cameron Walker, Aryana Chamberlain, Zaura Denton, and Cameron Ashley, in 'Museum.' Photos by Ken Harriford.

Aryana Chamberlain and Amanda L. Matousek play off each other perfectly as the two Barbaras, one worrying about the decline in natural fabrics as the other describes a rash all over her body. Angela Germanos plays the second guard with boredom, having only a few visitors for her exhibit elsewhere in the building. Dean Cottrill plays the second guard with excitement, enthusiastically looking at the differences between American museum security and European. Kestrel Watson plays Zoe with quiet horror at one guest's outrageous antics, before pulling off hijinks herself. Eliza Geib brings a comic intensity to Tink, dramatically telling a story about one of the artists after enthusiastically rubbing a sculpture all over her face. She blows on the artwork, looking for the secret that will unlock them.

Scenic Designer Gabby Bly creates an exhibit space highlighting the unusual art. At audience left are several pedestals to hold sculptures, while on the opposite side, mannequins hang on a clothesline, with a tray of clothespins on the side. In the back are four large painting-like pieces hanging on the wall. Benches are throughout the stage. Costume Designers Olivia Comeau and Nyla Washiewicz keep the large cast of characters immediately distinguishable. The two Barbaras wear similar floral dresses, while Francoise is in a red pantsuit.

Lighting Designer Magdalene Cunningham spotlights a few characters, particularly Tink during her dramatic monologue. Special lighting effects occur for the paintings in the back. Sound Designer Steven Ney throws out comical sounds, including a too-loud self-guided tour cassette.

Director Atticus Cooper Broidy keeps the energy high with characters moving constantly throughout the stage and on and off. The actors navigate the stage and each other well and switch characters seamlessly. They hit all the right comic moments. *Museum* pokes great fun at the eccentricities of art and art-goers and is well worth seeing.

Running Time: Approximately 90 minutes, with no intermission.

Museum (<https://www.aacc.edu/campus-life/attend-a-performance/>) plays through April 19, 2025, presented by Anne Arundel Community College performing at the Robert E. Kauffman Theater in the Pascal Center for the Performing Arts, 943-951 Anne Arundel Community College Road, Arnold, MD. For tickets (\$5–\$20) call the box office at 410-777-2457 or purchase **online**. (<https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/aacc-performances-2606819>)

