

Spring Awakening

This quartet of new and newly expanded museums around the globe should provide all the enticement you need for a cultural pilgrimage.

Museums rarely have enough room to display more than a fraction of their ever-growing collections, which means visitors never get to see as much of the holdings as they're hungry for. For these four international institutions, however, that's all changing this season, as they debut large, often architect-designed buildings and sprawling expansions. Presenting everything from Ziggy Stardust costumes in London to treasures of contemporary Asian art on Japan's Naoshima Island, they offer something for connoisseurs and collectors of every stripe. **Andrew Sessa**



THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART IN WARSAW

This 20-year-old museum's first permanent home—designed by Thomas Phifer, around a monumental central double staircase flooded with natural light—doesn't shy away from engaging with the fraught past of its Eastern European location. Among the more than 150 modern and contemporary works by Polish and international artists in the inaugural exhibition, which opened in February, sits one especially poignant installation: a city-view gallery playing a recording of artist Nikolay Karabinovich whistling “Wind of Change,” the 1990 Scorpions song that chief curator Natalia Slepiewicz says is “considered a major cultural influence accompanying the fall of the Berlin Wall. Together with the chaotic bricolage of the urban landscape outside, it tells you more about the city’s history than the classic textbooks.”

NAOSHIMA NEW MUSEUM OF ART

Although it's the 10th, Tadao Ando—designed museum to open amid the striking natural beauty and villages of the Fukutake Foundation's Benesse Art Site on Japan's Naoshima Island, this 34,000-square-foot serenely minimalist hilltop building overlooking the Seto Inland Sea is the first here devoted to Asian artists, such as Japan's Takashi Murakami, China's Cai Guo-Qiang, and South Korea's Do Ho Suh, and will present a mix of existing works, new commissions, and site-specific installations. Unlike its predecessors, it will also occasionally change what's on view. As a result, the museum—constructed of Ando's signature concrete and opening in late May—“offers a unique perspective,” says director Miki Akiko, “enriching the diversity of artistic expressions and perspectives . . . through encounters with art, nature, and local communities.”



MUSEU DE ARTE DE SÃO PAULO

This museum's long-delayed expansion opened in late March in a minimalist black 14-story tower conceived to subtly complement the institution's original 56-story concrete-and-steel skyscraper, which was designed in bright red and designed by celebrated Brazilian modernist Lina Bo Bardi. The new 84,000-square-foot building—originally planned in light-filtering perforated, plated metal by São Paulo's Modern Architecture Association—now provides plenty of smart space for a rich exhibition program (inaugural shows also devoted to the arts of Africa, the work of Renée Green, abstract art, and British artist Isaac Julien's nine-screen video-installation tribute to Bo Bardi).

VICTORIA & ALBERT'S V&A EAST STOREHOUSE

The late-May opening of this new 170,000-square-foot complex in East London, designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro, brings with it open storage displays for more than 250,000 objects, plus the David Bowie archives and conservation labs where visitors can observe experts at work. It also offers one-on-one visits with favorite finds. “You just book ahead to have a special appointment, and our new collections team will welcome you into one of our beautiful object-viewing rooms,” explains senior curator Georgia Haseldine.

She herself had a “ureka moment” after a recent encounter with one such item: a Victorian bridal tiara decorated with shimmering sequined flower petals. “On closer inspection, I realized the petals are made of fish scales!” Haseldine says. “And that is why it has an iridescent gleam.” Among her other favorites are the newly restored Kaufmann Office, which is the sole intact Frank Lloyd Wright interior outside the U.S., and a massive marble colomnade built for Shah Jahan, the Mughal emperor who commissioned the Taj Mahal.

