

New York 2010

Sightseeing

We visited the Mystic Seaport in Connecticut with Sabina. The Whoopie Goldberg movie "Mystic Pizza" was set there. The Seaport buildings were preserved to show the life of a whaling community. There were artists scattered around painting various famous scenes and ships including the actual ship, "Armistad". We also visited the Seaport Art museum there.

Shopping

Keeb and I then headed to Manhattan for the rest of our stay in New York. One day we took the Staten Island ferry and did some shopping on the island. We were quite amused by the New Yorkers complaining about the bus there. A man, who sounded like he would fit right in with the Sopranos, kept saying "Unbelievable" every time the bus went over a rough patch.

We also went to the "Strand" second-hand bookstore and spent quite a while there, after all it has two miles of books. Keeb asked one of the attendants if they had "Hard SciFi, not woo hoo SciFi". The attendant took it in stride. We have returned to this bookstore over the years and have always enjoyed our time there.

Art

We visited the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA). But just to be clear it was Keeb who suggested we go this time. Of course, I was thrilled since I am the one who usually initiates that visit. While I was browsing the exhibits, Keeb had wandered into another room and then came to find me with BIG grin on his face. All he said was that I had to see something and guided me into a room from which garbled sounds were coming. When I stepped in, I saw what I thought were the backs of paintings but when I reached in front of them, the fronts were also blank and each one was playing a recording of a voice saying the days of the week in a continuous loop. I was experiencing Bruce Nauman's "Days" and I can only ask "what the hell was this doing in a museum?" Of course, Keeb was by then laughing his ass off at my quizzical expression and indicating the security guard who was standing stone-faced in the middle of the exhibition wearing ear plugs. Clearly, he was not a fan of this avant garde installation. A word to the wise – the fifth floor of MOMA is the floor with paintings by Salvador Dalí, Rene Magritte, Jasper Johns, Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein. If you walk around floors 1-4 you are liable to find exhibits containing blank canvases and security guards refusing to experience the art. Just saying.

Keeb explored Central Park on his own and then returned with me to a scenic spot he had found where a man was playing a sax near the majestic Bethesda fountain. Just beyond the fountain people were paddling boats and to the right was an arched bridge under which people were singing what sounded like hymns from where we stood, it was a Sunday so that made sense. Keeb could see how thrilled I was with this spot and asked if I felt that I was in a Jane Austin story. It turned out that one of the scenes of "Enchanted" was shot right there.

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Plays/Musicals

Sabina and I went to see "Fences". Keeb accompanied me to meet Sabina in the line and when he left us, he heard a man asking what were all those black people lined up to see! Clearly the guy was not a theatre buff since "Fences" had just won Tony awards for best revival, best actor and best actress the week before. We enjoyed the play very much – Denzel Washington was really riveting.

Another night Keeb and I took in "Rock of Ages". The whole audience was in their forties and we were given tiny torchlights shaped like lighters to light up during the slow songs. I was taken down memory lane hearing all those old Journey, Whitesnake, Bon Jovi, Styx and Foreigner songs. The story was stitched together to make use of the songs and it was cheesy but fun all the same.

Keeb and I also went to see "Red" – a two man play starring Alfred Molina as the abstract artist Mark Rothko. Now it was risky move on my part to get these tickets as Keeb was not a Rothko fan. Years before I had dragged Keeb to the De Menil Rothko Temple in Houston and he said afterwards that when he did not know much about art, he thought Rothko's paintings were crap and now that he knows a little more, he is *sure* they are crap. But the dialogue in the play was excellent and Keeb even bought the script on our way out of the theatre. In one memorable scene, Rothko came storming onto the stage from an exhibition of new artists and dismissed their work as "flags, comics and soup cans". He could not imagine that kind of art enduring. Earlier that week, when we visited the Museum of Modern Art, those very paintings occupied the fifth floor alongside the surreal masters.

Food

We had a delicious lunch at "Latitudes" near the Mystic Seaport – I had lotus root chips (a first for me) with my Asian chicken sliders. We also had a great seafood dinner at "McCormick and Schmicks" – we went back for desert and it was sinful. Then there was our Sbarro's experience – this buffet restaurant was not exactly elegant. Which was a good thing as I somehow managed to launch my chicken bone into the air quite a good height above my plate and then it fell right into my lap making a nice large greasy stain on my tunic. The two guys mopping (speaking what Keeb thought was Swahili) were the only witnesses to it. Keeb just shook his head and said he could not take me anywhere. Honourable mention to the "810 Deli" which was conveniently across the road from our hotel. I enjoyed my pricey bagel and egg salad – what's a holiday for if not to indulge. Sabina, Alan and I had a great dinner at "Jewel of India".