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Museum Crush

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to read \ to do



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The most beautiful, intriguing and powerful objects have one thing in common: they live in museums. Let's go find them.

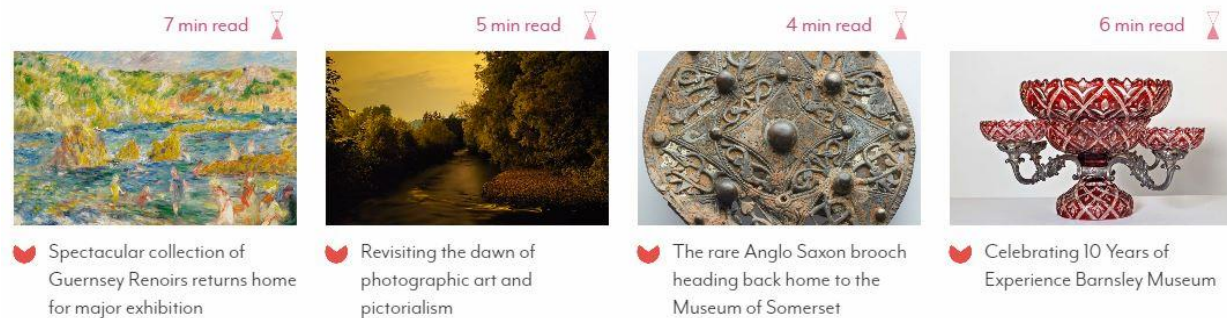
Homepage of the *Museum Crush* website

[Museum Crush](#), produced by UK-based charity Culture24, is a “whimsical and witty site . . . which showcases curiosities in collections up [and] down the land,” according to Culture24’s former board chair. Serving as a guide to current exhibits and lesser known collections in a wide variety of regional museums and London institutions, the website’s home page succinctly states its purpose: “The most beautiful, intriguing and powerful objects . . . live in museums. Let’s go find them.” Featured collections range in subjects from photographic [portraits](#) of South Asian immigrants in England’s West Midlands from the 1950s to 2000 by British Indian photographer Masterji; [watercolor illustrations](#) of the building of the Thames Tunnel; and [the world’s oldest known example](#) of a working camera obscura.

This weird and wonderful digital resource adds an element of serendipity for students and enthusiasts of art and design history and material culture. It complements efforts by national museums like the [Science Museum](#) and the [Victoria & Albert Museum](#) to make a larger percentage of their collection viewable by the public, helping to fulfill Culture24’s goal of promoting digital transformation in the

arts and cultural heritage sector. *Museum Crush* will be especially useful to North American students and scholars who lack the time and money to visit more remote locations in the UK.

The *Museum Crush* website is divided into two sections: To Read and To Do. To Read provides brief feature articles organized by browse topics, including “Curious,” “History,” “Women’s History,” “Art,” “Archaeology,” and “Britain’s Best Places.” Users must approach with an open mind because search results can only be filtered by keyword, with no sub-filtering by institutions or artist names. Articles are accompanied by multiple illustrations and a (surprisingly accurate) estimated reading time. The content is accessible, engaging, and well written and includes curated “more like this” links to further satisfy curious readers. For instance, an article on an [exhibit of Renoir’s landscapes](#) executed on the Channel Island of Guernsey links to another on recently discovered landscape sketches by Thomas Gainsborough. The illustrations are high quality, but they cannot be easily downloaded and include only a minimum of copyright information. More open source images would significantly improve this resource.



Showing how articles are arranged on the To Read section of the website

The To Do section of the *Museum Crush* website is a list of upcoming exhibits and museum events arranged chronologically. Users can filter by type (event or exhibit), nation/region, and date. Many are outside of Greater London, with a large concentration in the southeast of England, but extend to Scotland and Northern Ireland as well.

The *Museum Crush* website has an overall attractive and simple design. The white background, black text, and wide margins make it easy to read on both desktop computers and smartphones. Adding an About tab to the banner would improve navigation for first-time users. All of the subject areas could be better defined. “Curious” and “History” are particularly broad.

Museum Crush is a free resource, and no account is needed to access its content. Users are encouraged to support its efforts through sponsorship, but the type and amount desired are not clearly indicated.

Funding was originally provided by Arts Council England. That ended in November 2022. Given the recent decline in content, it is unclear whether *Museum Crush* has sufficient staffing and resources to maintain its operations. While the site still posts articles on current museum exhibits, at the time of this review social media posts had gone quiet. Instagram posts had not been updated since January, 2023, in contrast to multiple posts per month previously, totaling 580 since the website launch date in 2017. A request by the reviewer to receive a weekly email digest failed to receive a response. Even so, the existing content is enough to inspire students, scholars, and art enthusiasts of all ages.

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