

Exciting and inspiring: Seattle's MoPOP



Xenomorph from the movie Alien. Source: Carissa Goudey



John Cleese's helmet from the movie Monty Python and the Holy Grail. Source: Carissa Goudey

Every holiday offers exciting new opportunities to learn a little more history, whether you're long-hauling it overseas or going regional for the weekend. There is, of course, the possibility that you'll also have a lot of fun along the way.

Over the New Year break, I was incredibly fortunate enough to travel to Seattle (USA) – a city which prides itself on being inclusive, progressive and shamelessly geeky. It is therefore no surprise that one of the city's biggest attractions is the Museum of Pop Culture (MoPOP).

MoPOP was founded as the Experience Music Project in 2000 and has since expanded its collection to encompass the worlds of literature, music, television, cinema, video games and everything in between. To simplify, MoPOP collects and exhibits: storyboards, concept art, props and costumes from history's most iconic television shows and films (think Star Trek and Lord of the Rings); hand-written lyrics, photographs and instruments associated with celebrated Seattle-native musicians (MoPOP has the world's largest Jimi Hendrix collection), and independent arcade-style video games. And one of the best things about collecting games and instruments is that visitors can play them!*

Each year, MoPOP creates a keynote exhibition which goes on to tour the USA; at the time of our visit, this was Marvel: Universe of Superheroes. Starting with Marvel's origins as Timely Comics in 1939, the exhibition is a

heart-rending testimony of how escapism and optimism have lingered in the American consciousness, and the need for new heroes at times of political and social upheaval.



Museum of Pop Culture [MoPOP], Seattle. Source: Smithsonian Magazine

At the core of MoPOP's philosophy is the notion that museums should be exciting and inspiring. These elements, combined with wonderfully thoughtful interpretation, are what make this museum great. Whether you're a casual consumer of pop culture or part of a dedicated fandom, I'm sure you'll be excited and inspired by MoPOP as well.

*Not the ones marked for preservation, obviously.

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