

PREMIUM ARTS & CULTURE

MoSH spotlights national, local guitars and guitarists

By [Jada Ojii](#), Daily Memphian

Updated: June 28, 2023 11:43 AM CT | Published: June 27, 2023 4:00 AM CT



“America at The Crossroads: The Guitar and a Changing Nation” and “Grind City Picks: The Music That Made Memphis” exhibitions are on view now at MoSH. (Courtesy MoSH)

Guitars are the focus of two exhibitions currently on view in Memphis.

The Memphis Museum of Science and History (MoSH) is hosting one exhibition highlighting local Memphis musicians. The second is a national touring exhibition that displays the history of the guitar in America.

“Grind City Picks: The Music That Made Memphis” serves to inform Memphians about the musicians and guitarists who’ve made a cultural impact in and around the Bluff City.

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Featured in the exhibit are clothing and various guitars from Amy LaVere, a Memphis-based singer-songwriter and actress known for playing the upright bass, Charlie Feathers, the late country singer who got his start at Sun Studios, and MonoNeon, an eccentric singer and bassist who has worked with greats like Prince and George Clinton.

Blues rock guitarist Eric Gales and indie rock singer Julien Baker are also featured in the local exhibit.



The “Grind City Picks: The Music That Made Memphis” exhibition is on view now at MoSH. (Courtesy MoSH)

“We really tried to focus on celebrating Memphis music in all its different genres, from blues to soul to rock and roll to punk,” said Raka Nandi, director of exhibits and collections at MoSH. “So that’s been a very fun thing that we did. And we borrowed

Albert King's Flying V from the Stax Museum (of American Soul Music), so we feature that in the exhibition. We have a guitar by Steve Cropper in the exhibit (also)."

Pezz, a punk rock band that has been performing for more than 30 years, has its own panel in the exhibit. Emerging around the same time as popular punk bands Green Day and Blink-182, Pezz carved its own spot in music history with its approach to the genre and dedication to social justice.

"I think Memphis is a beautiful place to come up as an artist," Pezz bassist-singer Christian Walker said about his experience in the local music scene. "We get really overshadowed ... People want to talk about Elvis all the time, and they want to talk about blues all the time. But we've always had a vibrant inventive music scene."

MoSH makes some noise for nation's oldest high school band

The national touring exhibition is brought to the Memphis MoSH by the National Guitar Museum, which kicked off its tour in Grand Rapids, Michigan. After its Memphis stop, the tour will continue into late 2024 in Carlsbad, New Mexico, Meridian, Mississippi, and Sacramento, California.

Titled "America at The Crossroads: The Guitar and a Changing Nation," it highlights the guitar as "a symbol of the nation's diverse culture, ethnography and geography."

It currently has 40 instruments on display, as well as videos and photos that show the history of the guitar in America, giving music lovers an inside look into the artists that have pioneered multiple genres and influenced generations of musicians.

“The traveling exhibition has a Lucille that’s signed by B.B. King on exhibit,” Nandi said, referring to the name that the blues star would give the guitars he played.

“It has a lot of cool guitars there,” she continued. “It’s like a great exhibition for guitar geeks, but it’s also really great in terms of just people who love music. And many of these guitars are works of art by themselves. So it’s kind of cool to just come and admire them, even if you don’t know a lot about guitars.”

[More than 100 previously unreleased Stax recordings made public this week](#)

In addition to the local and touring guitar exhibits are summer programs spotlighting the stringed instrument. On Friday nights leading up to Aug. 8, MoSH will host a Guitar Heroes Summer Laser Shows series, which will allow attendants to experience music from legends like Jimi Hendrix, Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin, Metallica and more, accompanied by a laser light show in the museum’s planetarium.

From July to September, the museum will feature celebrated guitarists on the second Saturday of the month, including Albert King Jr., Robert Allen Parker and Gerard Harris in its The Way They Play series. Admission will be free with a general admission ticket to the museum, with visitors joining in on “discussions and demonstrations of iconic styles, tricks, techniques and quirks.”



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Both guitar exhibits run through Oct. 22 during MoSH's operating hours, which are Wednesday to Sunday from 10:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. [Click here for more information.](#)

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