

Urban News Bites

The latest from Britain, Mali, and more.

Oxford Britain's oldest museum, the Ashmolean, reopens its doors this November after a redesign by architect Rick Mather that replaced all but the 19th-century Cockerell building with 39 fresh galleries. A part of Oxford University, the newly skylit showcase invites visitors to draw their own connections between the museum's many treasures, which include Raphael drawings, a third-century Gandharan Buddha, and the Alfred Jewel, a filigreed gold and enamel ornament from

Anglo-Saxon times. At the new rooftop restaurant (the city's first), simply pull up a seat and feast your eyes on Oxford's skyline. Off campus, mingle with students at Freud Café-Bar (Walton St.), housed in a Greek Revival church. ■ **Bamako**

Long known for its music, Mali's capital is also the birthplace of the region's most renowned photographers, Malick Sidibé and the late Seydou Keïta.

In their black-and-white portraits, subjects are often posed against graphic backgrounds, with props like vintage motorbikes, transistor radios, and big sunglasses. Celebrating the tradition, the city's eighth African photography biennial will be held November 7–December 7 with photographs and video works by 40 artists. Mohamed Camara is one to look for; his interiors are staged for rawness and mystery rather than high style. ■ **San Francisco**

Using cake as her canvas, pastry chef and former art student Caitlin Williams Freeman serves up desserts at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's rooftop café that pay sugary homage to greats such as Josef Albers and Richard Avedon. Inspired by a Wayne Thiebaud in the permanent collection, Freeman transformed his painted rendition of a Boston cream pie into a raspberry/lemon-flavored confection. Other masterpieces on the rotating menu include an Ellsworth Kelly fudgsicle and a red velvet Roy Lichtenstein.



Unexpected images of Africa, like this one by Fouad Maazouz, mark Bamako's photo biennial. SFMOMA's rooftop café serves art-inspired desserts, such as the Mondrian cake (upper).