

VOGUE

A Guide to San Francisco's 2017 Fog Art and Design Fair

By Fanny Singer

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Nicole Wermers, *Untitled Chair – AFX-0*, 2016. Vintage fur, steel tubing, upholstery, silk and velvet, 33.4 x 25.5 x 23.6"

In keeping with the trend of San Francisco's belated ascent to the art world "big leagues" (2016 saw the opening of a greatly expanded SFMOMA, as well as local branches of the gallery behemoths Gagosian and Pace, not to mention the ambitious hybrid studio-gallery complex Minnesota Street Project), this year's Fog Design + Art fair (January 12 to 15) welcomes another clutch of blue chip players, from Lévy Gorvy to Gagosian, Gavin Brown, Kurimanzutto, Paula Cooper, and Tanya Bonakdar. While Fog has always been a unique platform insofar as it couples the sometimes strange bedfellows of art and design, the recent

Jessica Silverman Gallery
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arrival of a brand-name set of commercial galleries would appear to announce a changing tide: Silicon Valley is growing up, and so, too, is the formerly "local" art scene. While Bay Area denizens will persist in proudly applying that label to their food, it's about time the city's art world got a bit more international, and this year's Fog promises to do just that.

London comes to San Francisco via Tenderloin district trailblazer Jessica Silverman in the form of a partial re-staging of Nicole Wermers's 2015 Turner Prize-nominated sculptural installation *Infrastruktur*, which presents a scattering of modernist chrome chairs whose backs were draped in a collection of sumptuous fur coats. *Untitled Chair – AFX -0*, on view at Silverman's booth, showcases a particularly lush arctic fox fur and subtly altered Marcel Breuer "Cesca" chair: a perfectly oblique commentary on consumerist fetishism for a fair that's dedicated to both art and design.

After a two-year hiatus, Blum & Poe is back at Fog with sublimely restrained works by the late painter Kwon Young-woo and 80-year-old Lee Ufan, both members of a loose group of Korean artists whose minimalist canvases were dubbed *Dansaekhwa* (literally "monochrome painting") by the critic Lee Yil in 1980. Kwon Young-woo's blue ink seeps into the handmade paper like raindrops, as if an ode to the recent torrential downpours in Northern California.

Lévy Gorvy showcases a work by the venerable Pat Steir: an iconic ruby red cataract sprayed across a field of Yves Klein blue. Lévy Gorvy, who also represents the Klein estate (several Klein works are on view at the fair), is presenting what will surely be a high point of Fog week: a performance on Thursday evening at Grace Cathedral of Klein's groundbreaking *Monotone-Silence Symphony*: 20 minutes of a single note, sung and orchestrated, followed by 20 minutes of meditative silence. Conceived in 1949 and performed only once during Klein's lifetime, this marks its first performance in San Francisco and only its third in the U.S. to date.

Altman Siegel, who recently moved out of the cramped quarters of 49 Geary into the palatial purlieu of the Minnesota Street compound, is presenting a solo show of Sara VanDerBeek's textile-inspired C-prints, rendered in bubble-gummy '80s hues. Constructed via a laborious layering of digital and analog processes, they represent concrete subjects made illusory; an impressive array of interventions lurk behind their hermetic, impassive surfaces.

Another of Altman Siegel's artists, Laura Poitras collaborator and cultural geographer Trevor Paglen, will unveil the highly anticipated "Sight Machine," a fusion of visuals, artificial-intelligence technology, and a live performance by the Kronos Quartet, on Saturday evening at Pier 70. Earlier that morning, Paglen, erudite but eminently charismatic, will appear on a panel at Fog to discuss the intersection of art and the globally significant issues of technology and ethics, together with Alison Gass of the Cantor Arts Center, and Jennifer Granick, director of civil liberties at the Stanford Center for Internet and Society.

It's impossible not to be drawn to the joyful mid-century excess that's always a hallmark of the Reform Gallery display, in keeping with the aesthetic of the high-end jumble sale that characterizes their beloved Los Angeles outpost. A highlight is a cluster of ceramics by J.B. Blunk, the late Inverness-based cult artist best known for his imposing redwood sculptures and custom seating arrangements (several of which are scattered through Fog; others are permanently installed at Greens restaurant, just a stone's throw from the fair for visitors wishing to undertake a modest Blunk pilgrimage without venturing all the way to West Marin). Another local hero, Ruth Asawa, whose estate is new to the David Zwirner stable, is represented by a lovely duo of delicately crocheted hanging wire sculptures.

Ceramics prove they have enduring currency: Between Patrick Parrish's presentation of a stentorian group of geometrically patterned earthenware pieces by Brooklyn-based Cody Hoyt, and Salon 94's array of Betty Woodman's jaunty vases, wall-mounted deconstructed friezes, and exuberant mixed-media works (not to mention Barry McGee's pots and plates at Ratio 3, Sterling Ruby's massive ashtray-like ceramic sculptures at Gagolian, and the Finnish artist Kristina Riska's ethereal vessels at Hostler Burrows)—pottery prevails in 2017.