



Woody De Othello: "Art Bash activates SFMOMA in a night of performances and artist installations"

By Tony Bravo

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Dinner experience designed by Marilyn Minter during SFMOMA Art Bash.

Photo: Scott Strazzante/The Chronicle

In an art world constantly seeking new ways to create immersive experiences, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art offered no less than three such enveloping environments at its Art Bash on Wednesday, April 19.

The annual event, where partygoers explore the museum after hours, included a patron's dinner in Schwab Hall designed by acclaimed New York painter and photographer [Marilyn Minter](#), as well as a Jazz Lounge created by Oakland sculptor [Woody De Othello](#) and a new installation of Oakland artist [Sadie Barnette](#)'s "[The New Eagle Creek Saloon](#)."

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"We wanted to make it more fun, a little younger, more immersive, less transactional," SFMOMA Director [Christopher Bedford](#) said of the event, his first since joining the museum in June 2022. "And there will be surprises throughout the night."

Following the dinner, guests and after-partiers roamed the museum's seven floors of current exhibitions. Those included the celebration of the 2022 Society for Emerging Contemporary Art winners, the multimedia environmental art of Julian Charrière, and Janet Cardiff's site-specific video walk "The Telephone Call," which has been updated to reflect the museum's 2016 expansion.



Nicki Jizz performs at Sadie Barnette's New Eagle Creek Saloon during SFMOMA Art Bash.
Photo: Scott Strazzante/The Chronicle

And that was just the "Art."

The "Bash" featured musical sets by San Francisco's Duserock, San Francisco Giants resident spinner DJ Umami, performances by New York singer-songwriter Amber Mark and a DJ set by Berkeley singer and producer [Toro y Moi](#).

The evening raised \$2.3 million in support of SFMOMA's education, family and community engagement programs.

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Here are some of the highlights from the night:

Marilyn's World

[Minter's installation](#) in Schwab Hall was a bold, feminist statement that engaged issues of female body autonomy following the overturning of Roe v. Wade by the Supreme Court, and included both video art and fabric panels printed with images of women partly obscured by steamy shower doors wrapped around the space. The work's title also bravely recontextualized a pejorative term for female anatomy.

"We told her to be as controversial as she needed to be," said Bedford of the work. "She definitely did. This was like entering Marilyn's world."



Sadie Barnette's New Eagle Creek Saloon during SFMOMA Art Bash.
Photo: Scott Strazzante/The Chronicle

'The New Eagle Creek Saloon' gives life

[Barnette's installation](#) in the museum's White Box theater is an homage to her father Rodney Barnette's gay bar by the same name, the first Black-owned gay bar in San Francisco, open from 1990-93.

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"This is the fourth site it's been installed at, unless you count our garage at our family compound in Oakland," said Barnette. "This version of the bar has been around longer than my dad's bar. It has its own character, its own supporters and friends. The community keeps growing, and at SFMOMA there's a capacity to do a lot of programs with it."

As bartender Redwood Hill slung themed drinks like the "Miz Sin Gin & Juice" and "Rodney 4 Mayor '93," drag queen Nicki Jizz slayed with lip syncs, including a rendition of "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going" from the musical "Dreamgirls," which concluded with a triple wig-snatch reveal. Voguer Sir JoQ's spectacular dance moves added to the ambiance, making SFMOMA feel more like a club than a museum for the night.

"The New Eagle Creek Saloon" will be on view at the museum Thursday through Sunday till May 11, and will host a number of events during its run. It joins Barnette's "Bay Area Walls" commission "Space/Time," on view at the museum through June.

Saxy time in Woody's Jazz Lounge

De Othello turned much of the museum's seventh floor into dark, moody den featuring a collection of his ceramic vessels (with floral arrangements by Saint Flora), an 18-foot tall custom wallpaper installation and a performance piece, "The Tenor Maker," curated by Cheflee and featuring Bay Area musicians Pat Mesiti-Miller, Eli Maliwan and Shasha Fuentes.

"Cheflee and I wanted to activate the space with sound," said De Othello. "I wanted to collaborate with my friends, people who understand my relationship with making."

As part of the musical performance, saxophonist Maliwan not only played, but disassembled his instrument and invited people to engage with its components. The performance took the concept of "deconstructed jazz" to an exciting, and very literal, new place.

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Cocktail reception in Howard Street corridor during SFMOMA Art Bash.
Photo: Scott Strazzante/The Chronicle

Say Cheese!

The evening's special surprise attractions were photo booths featuring the work of Bay Area artists Rewina Beshue, Jeffrey Cheung and Simon Malvaez.

Malvaez's friends Juan Manuel Carmona, Elliot C. Nathan and Serge Gay Jr. attended Art Bash in support of him, their artistic partner on the mural ["Showtime"](#) on the exterior of Oasis nightclub in the South of Market neighborhood.

"We're really proud of him," said Gay. "Having local artists be such a big part of this night feels important, to have their work shown with very established artists."

The three revealed that they are working on a proposal for a mural tribute to the late drag star [Heklina](#) at the new Oasis Arts space.

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Amber Mark performs during SFMOMA Art Bash.
Photo: Scott Strazzante/The Chronicle

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