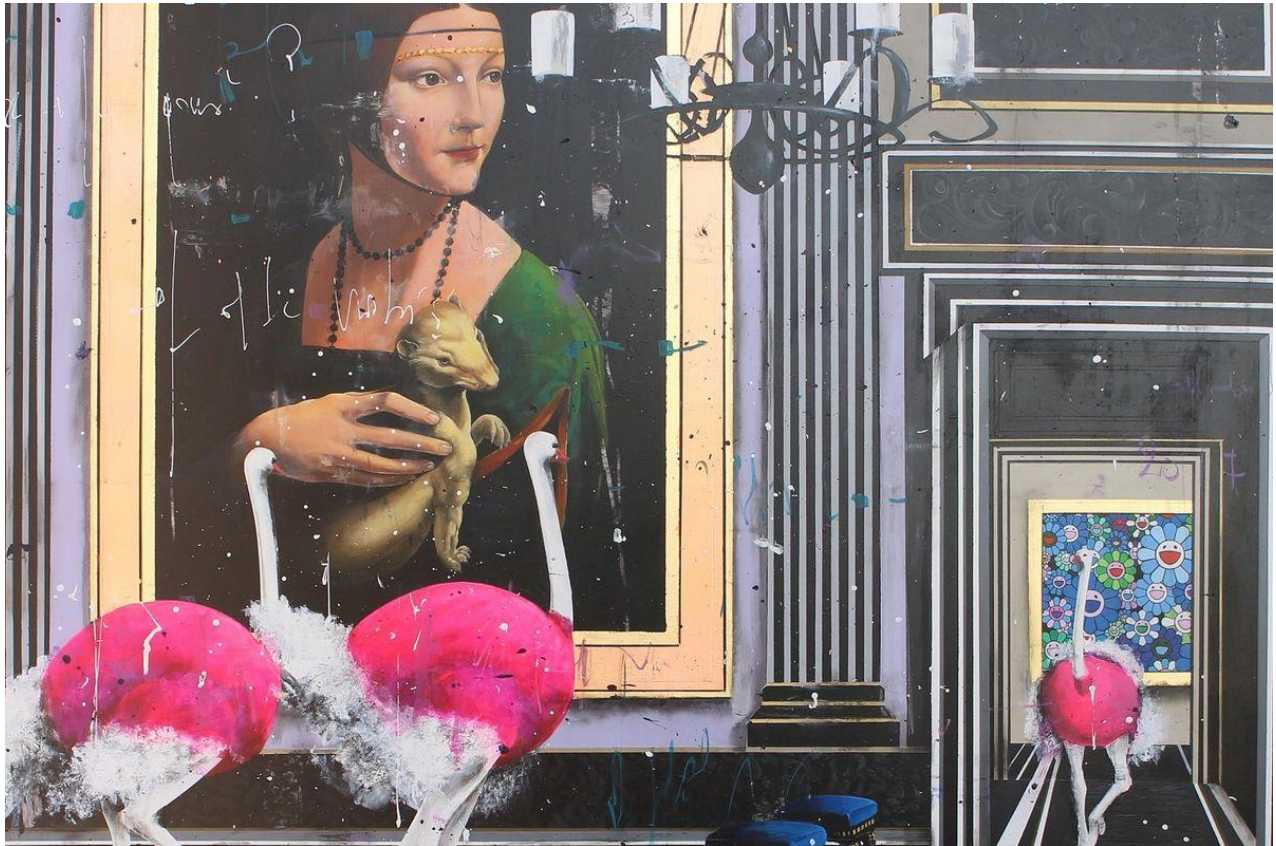




"This year's San Francisco Art Fair is the most cutting-edge yet."

By Emily Wilson

March 21, 2025



Angelo Accardi, 'Blend', 2017 (Courtesy of Palma Arte/San Francisco Art Fair)

Monetta White, executive director of the Museum of the African Diaspora, came up with the idea of a week highlighting Black artists in the Bay Area, which was inaugurated last October.

At this year's San Francisco Art Fair, White will discuss the now-annual event on the *Nexus: SF/Bay Area Black Art Week* panel, where she'll be joined by Lava Thomas, who created the Maya Angelou monument outside the main library; Jonathan Carver Moore, founder of the eponymous Market Street gallery; and artist, creative director, and author of *Illustrated Black History: Honoring the Iconic and the Unseen*, George McCalman.

The fair, the longest running in San Francisco, will have more than 80 exhibitors and several dozen cultural partners when it arrives at Fort Mason on April 17th. Public programming will include a variety of talks and panels on topics such as the SF underground, collecting Black art, and the intersection of art and tech—many of which will take place in a theater featuring surrealist art from the nonprofit Root Division.

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There will also be performances like the one by Marc Horowitz on the fair's opening night. Horowitz's social experiments include doing errands first with strangers, and then with a mule. He also spent a year driving around the country to have dinner with people who called his number after he wrote it on a dry-erase board in a Crate & Barrel catalog shoot. Who knows what he'll do next?



Ilhwa, Kim, 'Geographic Matter,' 2024 (Courtesy of Maybaum Gallery/San Francisco Art Fair)

Booths from cultural partners will also be open for exploration, including the group exhibition *(Re)Constructed Worlds* co-curated by the founders of COL Gallery, Callie Jones and Julia Li, for the San Francisco Art Dealers Association. Creativity Explored, the beloved San Francisco studio and artist community where adults with developmental disabilities create, exhibit, and sell art, will present *Jewel Box*, a selection of small abstract works in gem-like purples, greens, and golds.

Fair director Kelly Freeman says the event will bring together and highlight the vibrancy of the Bay Area artistic community, ensuring that visitors to this year's fair will see and hear things they haven't before.

"We're thrilled to dive into areas we haven't previously, like motherhood and art with a panel moderated by *Mother Magazine's* Katie Hintz-Zambrano. Also, artificial intelligence in the artist's studio with the nonprofit Gray Area, featuring professors from UC Berkeley and Stanford."

This year there will be a focus on the East Bay—including activations and partnerships with pt. 2 Gallery, Richmond's NIAD Art Center, Oakland Art Murmur, and the Berkely Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive—as well as a number of new participants, including Chinatown's fabulous Jessica Silverman and Mill Valley's Anthony Meier.

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Chelsea Ryoko Wong, 'Nobody Gets Out of Here Alive', 2024 (Courtesy of Jessica Silverman/San Francisco Art Fair)

Gallerist Micki Meng is one of those joining the fair for the first time. Her booth is “supporting a land conservation initiative by an artist who's based in Marin, Haley Mellin,” she says. “Her art practice is throughconserving lands around the globe to mitigate the climate crisis, and I'm a deep supporter and believer of this as well.”

“We are showing 50 canvases that will all be sold for \$500 each, and we're asking people in our community to make those canvases,” Meng elaborates over the phone from Paris. “Chris Bedford, the director of SFMOMA, and Bob Fisher, who is the board chair of SFMOMA will make something. Ali Gass, the director of ICA San Francisco, will make something, and so will artist and activist Félix de Rosen, who is on the environmentalist side.”

Meng, who goes to a lot of fairs, says this one is important to her to attend.

“San Francisco is at the center of the intersection between arts and technology, and many [of the] conversations being had around issues of our time. I feel like any major activity or moment that draws not only the local community but also the international community together, is very important, and I see the art fair as a leader in this.”

Yiwei Lu, who has galleries in Venice Beach and Wuhan, China, agrees.

“We really like San Francisco Art Fair because San Francisco has a large Asian population, and we work a lot with Asian diaspora artists,” she says. “Also, San Francisco has a long culture and history of artists living there and patrons supporting art, and all the museums are very awesome.”

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Liu Tianlian, 'Laundromat'(Courtesy of Yiwei Gallery/San Francisco Art Fair)

“This fair is very beautiful,” Lu continues. “We love the formation. It's really different than L.A. because whenever there's an art week in L.A., things are so spread out. [Here] everything is so centered. I love when things are all happening at the same time.”

Lu’s gallery will present a solo exhibition of Liu Tianlian, who immigrated to the U.S. several years ago and uses traditional brushwork to explore American subjects. Tianlian was exactly the kind of artist whose voice Lu wanted to make space for when she opened her gallery in 2019.

“Since her move to the States, she really dives into immigrant-centered worlds like nail salons and laundromats,” says Jiayi Hou, the show's curator. “We think that's very appropriate to show in a city like San Francisco, where Chinese immigration started really early on, and where it has the largest Chinatown in the world.”

// The San Francisco Art Fair is opens with a VIP Preview on Thursday, April 17th from 6pm to 9pm. The fair continues Friday and Saturday, April 18th + 19th from 11am to 7pm, and Sunday, April 20th, from 11am to 6pm; Fort Mason Festival Pavilion, 2 Marina Boulevard (Marina), sanfranciscoartfair.com

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