

The San Francisco Standard

Catherine Wagner: "Eight must-see art shows in the Bay Area this fall"

By Sam Mondros

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"Black Spaces: Reclaim & Remain" at the Oakland Museum of California.

From glitter-trailing Roombas to impressionist pairings, here are the exhibitions worth your time.

Fall is the most electric art season, when museums, galleries, fairs, and auctions roar back to life after summer's lull. The gallerists are finally back from the Hamptons, the curators' big shows have opened, and the calendar is packed again. Whether you're drawn to impressionist muses or ancient Chinese furniture, there's an abundance of extraordinary exhibitions on view in the Bay.

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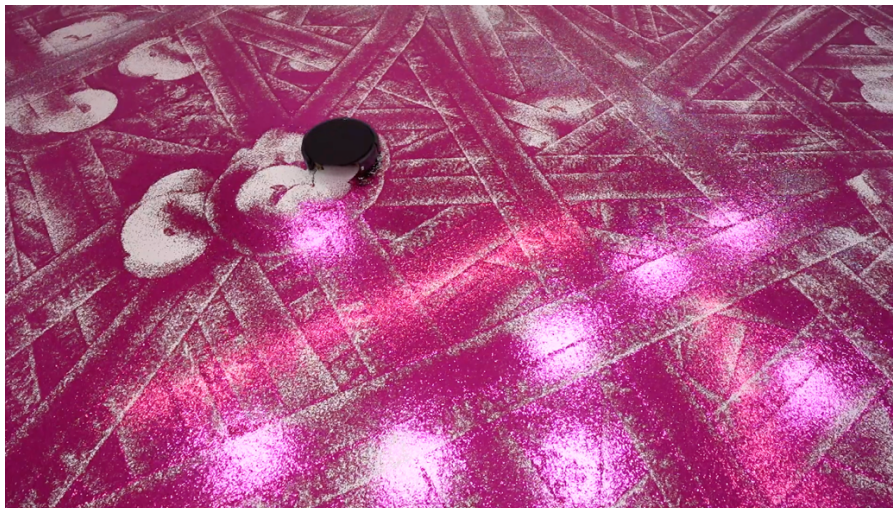
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Rave into the Future: Art in Motion



A strange and mesmerizing scene sets the stage for a show about dance culture: A formation of stomized Roombas creeping across a gridded platform as they ingest pink glitter and expel it in delicate lines behind them, tracing shiny fractals in their wake.

The show is highly immersive — yet among the quieter moments, the ceramic works by local artists Sahar Khoury and Maryam Youssif stand out. Their pieces ground the exhibition in material intimacy, offering a tactile counterpoint to the exhibition's pulsing atmosphere.



Source: Courtesy Borusan Contemporary

In a time when San Francisco museums are trying their best to bring in new audiences, Asian Art Museum curator Naz Cuguoglu has done an exceptional job with a thought-provoking and stunning exhibition that moves beyond the confines of white-walled gallery spaces.

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Selva Aparicio: What Remains



Selva Aparicio carved the designs of an Oriental rug into the wooden floor of Gallery Wendi Norris. | Source: Courtesy Gallery Wendi Norris

It's not every day you see a rug carved into the wooden floors of an art gallery. But nothing about New York artist Selva Aparicio's work is ordinary.

At Gallery Wendi Norris, the New York-based multidisciplinary artist has brought everyday objects to life with a brushing of autumnal colors. From her recapitulation of Frank Lloyd Wright's "Tree of Life" window to "Velo de Luto" ("mourning veil"), a wall-mounted installation comprising cicada wings sewn with the hair of three generations of women in the artist's family.

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Andrew Owen: In Light Years



Andrew Owen's photographs feature California's natural landscape at its best and worst. | Courtesy Small Works

Snow, fire, and the sublime power of nature anchor San Francisco photographer Andrew Owen's exhibition "In Light Years" at Small Works. His images are both epic and indicting, capturing Northern California's staggering beauty alongside the scars of human-made destruction. And visiting Small Works — the Potrero Hill gallery that doubles as a bespoke frame shop — is reason enough to seek out these sweeping landscapes.

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Caterina Fake: Bed for Dreaming



The Jones Institute is an experimental exhibition space in Alamo Square. | Source: Courtesy Jason Henry

In Alamo Square, a dream world is hiding in plain sight. Though it has become a go-to spot for emerging and established Bay Area artists, the Jones Institute isn't exactly a gallery. It's run out of the home of Aïda Jones, who began inviting her artist friends to decorate in 2018 before transforming her guest room into a show space. The latest installation is perhaps her most immersive. Arranged by artist and Flickr cofounder Caterina Fake, the room features ancient Chinese furniture and talismans scattered around a hulking, ancient bed where guests are invited to sign up to become "dreamers," wherein they spend a night to access the mysterious, the shadowy, and the otherworldly.

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Altman Siegel farewell party

For 16 years Claudia Altman-Siegel and her eponymous gallery have championed emerging and established artists locally and internationally. So last month, when she announced she was stepping back from the scene, it was a blow for the arts economy and for artists citywide. The gallery is celebrating its artists through ephemera, exhibition posters, and a selection of books from its archive.

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Catherine Wagner: Blue Reverie



San Francisco artist David Ireland had his Mission home turned into a gallery and artist residency. | Courtesy Catherine Wagner

When San Francisco artist David Ireland died in 2009, his home at 500 Capp St. in the Mission was transformed into a living artwork open to the public and for private artist residency programs. In "Blue Reverie," Bay Area artist Catherine Wagner saturates the house with blue — windows, walls, through sculptural objects, and light. She has spent years working with this color, drawn to its emotional weight and symbolic range. Here, blue becomes a filter for experiencing Ireland's home, casting the worn surfaces and idiosyncratic details in a different atmosphere.

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Manet & Morisot



Courtesy Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco

In the first major exhibition dedicated to the artistic exchange between French impressionists Édouard Manet and Berthe Morisot, Fine Arts Museums curator Emily Beeny reframes their relationship not as master and pupil — a story long favored by museums — but as a dialogue between muses. The show reunites their "Four Seasons" paintings (two by Manet, two by Morisot) for the first time in a major exhibition and sets their closely related canvases side by side.

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Black Spaces: Reclaim & Remain



Courtesy Oakland Museum of California

Equally steeped in sorrow and strength for the past — and in the hope and precarity of what comes next — this show opens by guiding viewers through the history of Russell City, a once-thriving Black neighborhood in the East Bay that was erased under the banner of urban renewal. The visceral impact of the works, alongside ephemera from East Bay families experiencing homelessness, are foiled by AI-generated pieces that appear later in the exhibition. But it's Oakland artist Adrian Burrell's sculpture, positioned as the exhibition's nucleus, that holds the show together.

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