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"Lava Thomas and Sadie Barnette: Nexus: SF/Bay Area Black Art Week is returning. Here's what stands out this year"

By Desiree Luo

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Nexus: SF/Bay Area Black Art Week 2026 will launch with a trio of exhibitions at the Museum of the African Diaspora led by "Dewey Crumpler: Sonic Lineages," the first institutional solo presentation in the city for the former San Francisco Art Institute associate professor. Provided by Dewey Crumpler and Jenkins Johnson Gallery.

The Bay Area's weeklong celebration of Black art and culture is returning for a third year with statewide ambitions.

The Museum of the African Diaspora plans to host Nexus: SF/Bay Area Black Art Week from Sept. 30-Oct. 4, featuring new collaborations connecting local artists and institutions to communities beyond the region.

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Most notably, Nexus will unite Los Angeles and Bay Area artists through the four-day exhibition "Art eXodus: From North to South, The Coast." Presented by Los Angeles gallerist Jac Forbes, the show opens Oct. 1 at Four One Nine in San Francisco.

"For MoAD to properly serve its mission, I knew that we had to build a better bridge between communities," Executive Director Monetta White told The Chronicle.



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This year's Nexus will launch with a trio of exhibitions at MoAD led by "Dewey Crumpler: Sonic Lineages," the first institutional solo presentation in the city for the former San Francisco Art Institute associate professor.

It joins "After the Island: Ornament and Ceramic Practice in the Jamaican Diaspora," in partnership with Gardiner Museum in Toronto, and "Black Cat Revolution" by Dorian Reid, a member of MoAD's 2026-27 Emerging Artist Program cohort.

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As in previous years, Nexus features solo and group exhibitions, artist talks, gallery tours, film screenings and musical performances that span the Peninsula, San Francisco, the North Bay and East Bay.

Participating museums include the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, de Young Museum, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and the Oakland Museum of California, in addition to multiple local galleries.



"Unnamed but Not Unknown II (Promise)" by Lava Thomas. Provided by Lava Thomas and Jessica Silverman

"Arts and culture are at the center of San Francisco's comeback," San Francisco Mayor Daniel Lurie said in a statement, "and Nexus helps shine a light on the extraordinary Black artists and organizations that help make San Francisco one of the world's great cultural destinations."

Among Nexus' San Francisco gallery exhibitions, Jessica Silverman will present solo shows by Lava Thomas, a Berkeley artist whose work is on view at the newly opened Obama Presidential Center in Chicago, and Oakland artist Sadie Barnette. Jenkins Johnson Gallery will open "Wake Up Everybody," an exhibition by David C. Driskell, while COL Gallery will present Antwoine Washington's solo show "life be lifing."

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In Oakland, Sheilby Macena and Simrah Farrukh will present the project exhibition "Hold Me Tender," drawing on Haitian American and Pakistani American cultural traditions.



"Dots" by Sadie Barnette

Provided by Sadie Barnette and Jessica Silverman

Other new additions this year include MoAD Mix on Oct. 4, honoring the 60th anniversary of the Black Panther Party. The event centers around a dialogue with Xavier Buck, founder and chief curator at the Black Panther Party Museum in Oakland.

That same day, a ticketed dinner and performance with Nigerian American chef and multimedia artist Salimatu Amabebe will be hosted at the Headland Center for the Arts in Marin.

Nexus will also bring back its annual Artists Party for local creators, which will take place at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts on Oct. 1.

For MoAD, the week will culminate with its Afropolitan Ball, the museum's annual fundraising gala, on Oct. 3, at the San Francisco Ferry Building.

"The momentum is really growing to a global audience as well as a national audience," White said.

"People are saying, 'What's going on in San Francisco?' for Nexus. That's what I'm trying to create and in return see that be an opportunity of economic support for our local artists. ...

"I feel like Nexus really has the potential to really put the Bay Area art scene on the map."

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