

An Insider's Guide to Navigating the San Francisco Art Scene

ARTSY EDITORIAL
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The reopening of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) this month is expected to bring a tidal wave of visitors to the corner of 3rd and Howard in downtown San Francisco, and within just a few blocks, you can find several other major art museums (plus the newest Gagosian gallery) all securing the SoMa neighborhood as an important anchor for art in the city. But to capture the depth and breadth of San Francisco's unique, occasionally elusive art scene, you'll need to venture further afield; for every story of rising rents leading galleries to shutter in one established art hub, there is another about re-openings, in a more removed location.

This non-exhaustive list of agendas by neighborhood necessarily leaves out some of the more isolated gems (notably, San Francisco Art Institute's



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compensation, we offer a rich, exciting mix of emerging and prominent art spaces in the four strongest art ecosystems in the city.



SoMa and the Embarcadero



For many visitors to San Francisco, this will be the first stop on any art agenda, and rightly so: SoMa (South of Market Street, downtown's major artery) and the nearby Embarcadero along the water boasts cornerstone museums, the best photography venue in the city, and several on-point galleries, as well as more idiosyncratic spaces for those willing to travel to the less-touristy area of the neighborhood.

If you have a day:

10:00 a.m. | Dive into one of the city's top museums: SFMOMA, the YBCA, or MoAD

Start your day with a visit to the massive new SFMOMA (151 3rd Street) and take any pressure off yourself to see all of it.

With seven floors jam-packed with modern and contemporary art, including the new Pritzker Center for Photography, it's easy to stop only when the need for

lunch becomes dire or your eyes stop focusing. Alternatively, the smaller Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (701 Mission Street) offers a rigorous visual arts program with a decidedly local, socially engaged focus. Or, you may choose to begin with the world-class Museum of the African Diaspora (685 Mission Street), one of the only museums that focuses on art made by African artists across the globe.



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1:00 p.m. | Refocus with a contemplative visit to Pier 24

After lunch (ideally at the Ferry Building), stroll down the Embarcadero for the early afternoon slot at Pier 24 Photography (located under the Bay Bridge, between Pier 26 and the Fire Station) which houses the jaw-dropping Pilara Foundation's collection in addition to exhibiting ambitious but accessible shows of historical and contemporary photography. It's crucial to make a free reservation in advance (appointments are also offered at 10:00 a.m. and 3:15 p.m.).

4:00 p.m. | End the day at SoMa's alternative spaces

For a cross-section of the art world most tourists don't see, head to the southwest area of SoMa near 7th street to view the locally focused gallery at the nonprofit Root Division (1131 Mission Street) and the alternative space aptly named Alter Space (1158 Howard Street), which shows outstanding emerging artists and has a unique jail-cell residency program. If it's a Wednesday, you're particularly in luck, as the distinctive Prelinger Library (301 8th St #215) down the street holds its hours until late in the

evening, with a treasure trove of bizarre and out-of-print books that have inspired many San Francisco artists.

Other sights to see:

871 Fine Arts, 20 Hawthorne Street

California Historical Society, 678 Mission Street

Contemporary Jewish Museum, 736 Mission Street

Crown Point Press, 20 Hawthorne Street

Gagosian Gallery, 657 Howard Street

Mirus Gallery, 540 Howard Street

The Luggage Store, 1007 Market Street

Gallery Wendi Norris, 161 Jessie Street

SF Camerawork, 1011 Market Street

Weinstein Gallery, 444 Clementina Street

Tenderloin, Chinatown, and Union Square



Left: Installation view of “Vintage” at Jessica Silverman Gallery. Courtesy of the gallery; Right: Installation view of “Christian Marclay: Six New Animations” at Fraenkel Gallery. Courtesy of the gallery.

The area stretching roughly half a mile north of Market Street—bounded by the 101 to the west and Montgomery to the east—includes some of the

most established as well as a few of the hippest and most innovative galleries in San Francisco, along with the best venues for viewing Asian art. It also transverse an area racked by homelessness and drug use; read up on the Tenderloin before you go to get a sense of the importance of this neighborhood. You'll be rewarded tenfold for stepping out of your comfort zone.

If you have a day:

11:00 a.m. | Dive deep into the Tenderloin

The two biggest highlights in the Tenderloin are a block apart: the flourishing Jessica Silverman Gallery (488 Ellis Street), which boasts exhibitions by a roster of top international artists; and the Tenderloin Museum (398 Eddy Street), which tells the story of its fascinating and rich history. These two institutions capture the seeming paradox of this incredibly exciting and diverse, yet marginalized, neighborhood. Down the street, The Thing Quarterly (447 O'Farrell Street) is sometimes open to the public for special exhibitions and events, check before you go. (Find more galleries in the area listed below.)

1:00 p.m. | Visit the Asian Art Museum or swing through Geary Street galleries

Depending on how your tastes run (and what's currently on view), the next best stop is either the Asian Art Museum (200 Larkin Street), housed on the stunning Civic Center Plaza, or the esteemed galleries housed at 49 Geary Street, where showings by Altman Siegel and Fraenkel Gallery are almost always particularly strong.

4:00 p.m. | End the day in Chinatown

Since you'll definitely want to stay in Chinatown for dinner, end the day with a couple of the most exciting galleries in the city: CAPITAL (716 Sacramento Street) and Et al.(620 Kearny Street)—both of which have an unflinching approach to exhibitions by emerging and established artists. The visual arts program at the Chinese Culture Center (750 Kearny Street #3) up the street offers a counterpoint to preconceptions about what contemporary Chinese art looks like.

Other sights to see:

Anglim Gilbert Gallery, 14 Geary St

John Berggruen Gallery, 228 Grant Avenue (moving to 10 Hawthorne Street in SoMA this fall)

Caldwell Snyder Gallery, 341 Sutter Street

Chandran Gallery, 459 Geary Street

Christopher-Clark Fine Art, 377 Geary Street

CK Contemporary, 357 Geary Street

Dolby Chadwick Gallery, 210 Post St

Haines Gallery, 49 Geary Street #540

Hashimoto Contemporary, 804 Sutter Street

K. Imperial Fine Art, 49 Geary Street #509

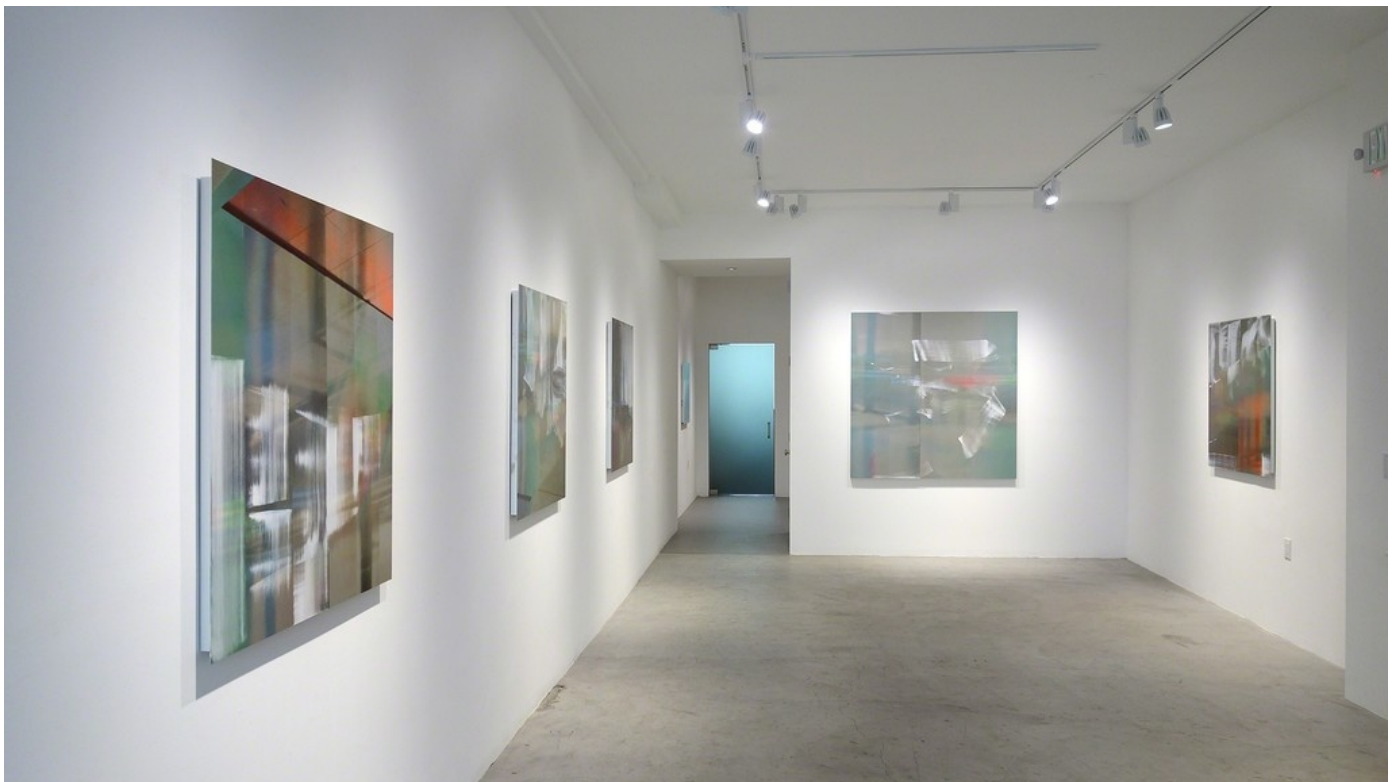
The McLoughlin Gallery, 49 Geary St #200

Meyerovich Gallery, 251 Post St

Scott Richards Contemporary Art, 251 Post Street #425

Mark Wolfe Contemporary, 555 Sutter St #405

The Mission



Installation view of "Justine Frischmann" at George Lawson Gallery. Courtesy of the gallery.

Times are changing for the Mission as gentrification is squeezing out many

of the artists who have called this dynamic neighborhood home for decades—but it's still the best place to capture the ethos of artmaking in the city, from a wide range of highly regarded galleries to crucial institutions and nonprofits.

If you have a day:

11:00 a.m. | **Contextualize yourself at SOMArts and Utah Street galleries**

Even though it's technically at the southernmost edge of SoMA, the nonprofit cultural center SOMArts (934 Brannan Street) is a great first stop for a day of art viewing in the Mission. Many of its Ramp Gallery exhibitions will help in understanding San Francisco's critical art movements and commitments. Close by on Utah Street, the Hosfelt Gallery (260 Utah Street), Catharine Clark Gallery (248 Utah Street), George Lawson Gallery (315 Potrero Avenue), and Brian Gross Fine Art (248 Utah Street) represent a rigorous mix of emerging and established artists. (Find more galleries in the area listed below.)

2:00 p.m. | **Immerse yourself in the global and the local**

Further south in the Mission and across the street from each other, the artist-centered nonprofits Southern Exposure (3030 20th Street) and Kadist Art Foundation (3295 20th Street) both put on consistently thought-provoking, cutting-edge exhibitions and programming. Kadist's residencies—and the resulting exhibitions—are particularly impressive. Kadist hosts both international artists as well as a pioneering magazine-in-residence program.

4:00 p.m. | **An intellectual and playful end to the day**

Deep in the heart of the Mission, the exhibitions at Ratio 3 Gallery (2831 Mission Street) and CULT | Aimee Friberg Exhibitions (3191 Mission Street) are utterly professional in the best sense of the word. In contrast to the twee crafts that line the major shopping thoroughfare of Valencia Street, these two galleries on Mission St. evidence a deep interest in salient issues of contemporary art—and what's trending globally—along with a playful sophistication in their curation.

Other sights to see:

500 Capp Street (the David Ireland House), 500 Capp Street

Adobe Books Backroom Gallery, 3130 24th Street

Boiler Room at Heath Ceramics, 2900 18th Street

The Lab, 2948 16th Street

Potrero Hill and Dogpatch



Exterior view of Minnesota Street Projects. Photo courtesy of Minnesota Street Projects.

The zip code that's currently getting the most local art-world attention is the Dogpatch district, where the Minnesota Street Project is providing a much-needed infrastructure for some of the best galleries and most exciting artists in the city; and depending on when you read this, several other galleries on this list may have already made the move there (like Altman Siegel in September).

More galleries in the area:

fused space, 1401 16th Street

Romer Young Gallery, 1240 22nd Street

North Beach, Pacific Heights, and Beyond

Anthony Meier Fine Arts, 1969 California Street

The Dryansky Gallery, 2120 Union Street

Paul Thiebaud Gallery, 645 Chestnut Street

Hespe Gallery, San Francisco. By appointment only.

Lebreton Gallery, San Francisco. By appointment only.

NanHai Art, 510 Broadway #301, Millbrae

Patricia Sweetow Gallery, 2440 Telegraph Ave, Oakland

Wirtz Art, Oakland. By appointment only.

Paulson Bott Press, 2390 Fourth Street, Berkeley

Rosier Gallery, Berkeley. By appointment only.

Seager Gray Gallery, 108 Throckmorton Avenue, Mill Valley

—Monica Westin

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