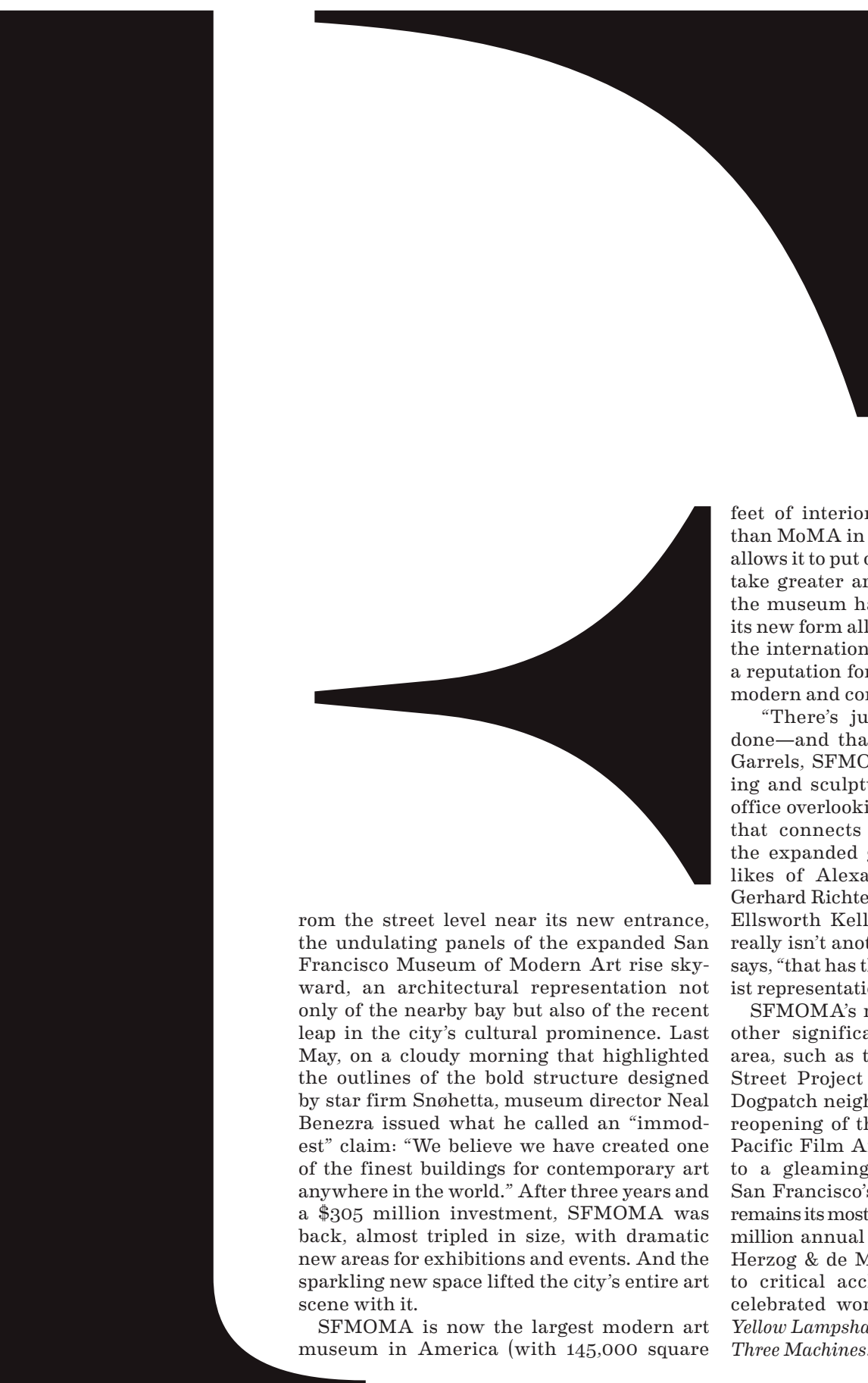


Is San Francisco America's New Art Capital?



After last year's colossal reopening of SFMOMA, the art world's axis
has tilted toward San Francisco, where new galleries
and institutions are drawing visitors from around the world

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rom the street level near its new entrance, the undulating panels of the expanded San Francisco Museum of Modern Art rise skyward, an architectural representation not only of the nearby bay but also of the recent leap in the city's cultural prominence. Last May, on a cloudy morning that highlighted the outlines of the bold structure designed by star firm Snøhetta, museum director Neal Benezra issued what he called an "immodest" claim: "We believe we have created one of the finest buildings for contemporary art anywhere in the world." After three years and a \$305 million investment, SFMOMA was back, almost tripled in size, with dramatic new areas for exhibitions and events. And the sparkling new space lifted the city's entire art scene with it.

SFMOMA is now the largest modern art museum in America (with 145,000 square

feet of interior exhibit space, 20,000 more than MoMA in New York). The museum's size allows it to put on more exhibits than ever, and take greater artistic risks. Founded in 1935, the museum has always been respected, but its new form allows a much broader impact on the international art world. It is fast gaining a reputation for being *the* place to experience modern and contemporary art.

"There's just much, much more to be done—and that just ripples out," says Gary Garrels, SFMOMA's senior curator of painting and sculpture. Sitting in his ninth-floor office overlooking the city and the Bay Bridge that connects it to Berkeley, he describes the expanded gallery spaces devoted to the likes of Alexander Calder, Agnes Martin, Gerhard Richter, Andy Warhol, Philip Guston, Ellsworth Kelly and Richard Serra. "There really isn't another museum in the world," he says, "that has this many long-term, single-artist representations."

SFMOMA's revamping has coincided with other significant art developments in the area, such as the opening of the Minnesota Street Project art space in the gentrifying Dogpatch neighborhood, and the \$112 million reopening of the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, which last year moved to a gleaming downtown Berkeley space. San Francisco's oldest museum, the de Young, remains its most vaunted, drawing more than one million annual visitors to a copper-and-glass Herzog & de Meuron structure that debuted to critical acclaim in 2005, housing such celebrated works as Elmer Bischoff's 1969 *Yellow Lampshade* and Wayne Thiebaud's 1963 *Three Machines*. >





The new Snøhetta staircase, with Alexander Calder's *Untitled* (1963), in the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr., Atrium at SFMOMA



The Gallerist

CHERYL HAINES

When Ai Weiwei, China's most acclaimed artist, was under virtual house arrest in Beijing six years ago, San Francisco gallery owner Cheryl Haines flew to his studio and explored the idea of a dramatic new exhibition space. "What if," Haines asked Ai, "I got you a prison?" The facility Haines had in mind: Alcatraz, the San Francisco Bay island that once housed Al Capone and other notorious inmates before it became a park and tourist attraction.

Alcatraz had never hosted a major art exhibit, but Haines believed she could orchestrate it because she's also the founding executive director of the FOR-SITE Foundation, a San Francisco nonprofit that brings noteworthy shows to the city's federally-run public parks. "@Large: Ai Weiwei on Alcatraz" came into being in 2014, when almost 900,000 people viewed Ai's artwork about political prisoners and freedom of speech. (Ai did not attend: He was prohibited from leaving China.)

A native of New York State, Haines has represented Ai's work for years at her downtown gallery, and relishes the city's historic connection to Asia. "San Francisco is a particularly vibrant environment to work in contemporary art, in part because it's not as Eurocentric as a lot of other cities in the U.S.," she says. "We are a Pacific Rim city."

Haines' gallery is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, with an international stable of artists that includes British sculptor Andy Goldsworthy and American photographer David Maisel. During the build-up to "@Large," she dyed parts of her blonde hair blue, as a visual reminder to stay determined. The blue remains in her locks—a sign to herself and others that she's still in a prime position to get things done.



Frida Kahlo portrait
outside the Precita
Eyes Mural Arts and
Visitors Center in the
Mission District

Then there's the city's legion of smaller galleries, including those with established reputations like Haines Gallery, and those with new visions such as Chandran Gallery, which debuted two years ago in the Union Square area with an exhibit by a mysterious photographer named Swampy. Last year, a new Gagosian Gallery opened across the street from SFMOMA, in a building where Crown Point Press and other galleries have huddled together for years.

Even the city's office blocks offer a visual landscape that didn't exist a few years ago. The lobby of the LinkedIn building, for instance, features three sizable Frank Stella works, including his 1983 mixed-media piece *Shards III*. People have taken to gathering in the nearby café, or even sitting on the floor when all the seats are taken, to enjoy this troika of Stella works.

The city's best street art can be found in the Mission District, especially in Clarion Alley, where artists have been putting up murals since 1992. But walls in other areas, including downtown, now also feature works by international artists such as Curriot from Mexico. Among the local talents with global followings are Zio Ziegler, Rigo 23 and Apexer. For all the fuss being made about the street-art scene in Miami's Wynwood district, San Francisco's is more extensive and venerable.

There has also been a proliferation of new art fairs here—like FOG Design+Art, which debuted in 2014, and this year's newcomer, *Untitled*, San Francisco—which have joined more established events like SF Open Studios. All these factors have ushered in a new reality: San Francisco has spiraled up the ranks of global art capitals. Dealers across the city are seeing a spillover effect, with more visitors and buyers coming from outside of town.

"Because of the new museum, the caliber of people who've been visiting the city has increased from the international arts community," says Andrew McClintock, gallery director at Ever Gold [Projects], which moved to the Minnesota Street Project from the Tenderloin district in June. McClintock says his gallery had its best sales year ever in 2016, which included the West Coast debut of Ghanaian artist Serge Attukwei Clottey. "Most of the show," he says, "ended up selling out."

"More people are definitely coming to San Francisco specifically because of the developments that are happening," adds Lisa Dolby Chadwick, whose eponymous gallery has been an anchor near Union Square for 20 years. And, significantly, a lot of these arrivals are >



The Collector

PAMELA JOYNER

As art collectors, Pamela Joyner and her husband, Fred Giuffrida, have amassed one of the world's most extensive private collections of African-American art, including pieces by Raymond Saunders, Kara Walker and Mark Bradford. Much of it is in their San Francisco home that, like a good museum, demands hours of perusal. Joyner, who began the collection 20 years ago, has long vowed to share the work with as many people as possible.

Besides opening the couple's mansion to art tours, she recently published a book, *Four Generations: The Joyner/Giuffrida Collection of Abstract Art*, with in-depth chapters by artists and scholars, and has arranged a national museum tour of some 60 pieces that will debut this fall at New Orleans' Ogden Museum of Southern Art. Joyner

and Giuffrida also run an artists' residency at the couple's large Sonoma County property. "I consider us to be stewards of the works, stewards of the stories, stewards of the careers," she says. "We're activists."

Joyner became a collector by chance. In the 1980s, while at Harvard for her MBA, she met Lowery Stokes Sims, the first African-American curator at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, who advised her to buy art when her career was established. That started Joyner on a hobby that quickly morphed into a mission: to help reintroduce the long line of African-American painters who have produced great work while being overlooked by the art establishment. She is now a trustee of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Tate Americas Foundation.

"It's turned into a life-consuming phenomenon," says Joyner. "I started buying art not necessarily for history but for myself. And I learned the history and said, 'This is a place I can make a difference.'"



The de Young museum in Golden Gate Park, designed by Herzog & de Meuron in 2005

young—SFMOMA director Benezra says that almost half of the museum's visitors are under 35 years of age.

Meanwhile, many new U.S. exhibits are opening in San Francisco—not in New York, Los Angeles or Miami—including SFMOMA's Edvard Munch exhibit that will open in June, the artist's first show on the West Coast since 1951.

But the museum doesn't hold a complete monopoly on groundbreaking shows. Next year, the de Young will host an exhibition called "The Fashion of Islam," making it the first major U.S. art museum to focus on

DEALERS ARE SEEING A SPILLOVER EFFECT, WITH MORE BUYERS.

Muslim sartorialism. De Young director Max Hollein says he is retooling the artistic purview because he wanted the museum, which opened in 1895, to reflect a more "dynamic curatorial approach."

Indeed, with the arrival of more and more art venues in the city, there is a corresponding rise in competition. Hence the growing number of visitor-friendly initiatives across >

The Curator

GARY GARRELS

Never mind his doctoral work in sociology at Princeton University. No, it was Gary Garrels' ability to type fast that helped him land his first job in the art world: assistant to the assistant curator at MIT's art gallery.

"I stumbled in the back door because I typed 80 words a minute, and I'm very organized," says Garrels, SFMOMA's Elise S. Haas Senior Curator of Painting and Sculpture, as he sits in his ninth-floor office amid stacks of art books and project papers that he jokes are *not* organized.

At age 65, he has made his reputation at some of the United States' most esteemed institutions, including MoMA and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. He rejoined SFMOMA in 2008 after working there from 1993 to 2000. With the museum's expansion, Garrels is in a position to put all his experience into greater practice, which means advocating for new artists as well as established ones whose work he wants to reposition. A perfect example: the 2016 exhibit "Bruce Conner: It's All True," the first retrospective of the San Francisco artist who's considered the father of the music video and a pioneer in assemblage.

Garrels was raised on an Iowa farm where his father grew corn and soybeans. He always knew the farm life wasn't for him, though "I joke that if I shake my cuff a little chaff will still fall out." SFMOMA drew him in the '90s because of its then new building, designed by Swiss architect Mario Botta. This new structure gives Garrels even more opportunities. "With art, you never reach the end of the road. There are questions that remain unanswered. There's always something new to discover—even with an artist you think you know."





town. With its reopening, SFMOMA changed its ticket policy for visitors 18 and younger: They all get in free. The Minnesota Street Project, for its part, has a “welcome-dog” policy. “The doors are wide open,” says Deborah Rappaport, the project’s co-founder. “Kids and dogs are always welcome—and in San Francisco that’s important. Dogs sometimes even more than kids.”

Not that the Project is hurting in this regard. Since its opening a year ago, about 100,000 people have ventured inside—far surpassing anyone’s expectations. The Dogpatch neighborhood has become a destination now,

stretching the geographical boundaries of the city’s art scene, which had been centered for years in downtown San Francisco.

“We were confident we were going to be successful—we just didn’t think it would happen this fast,” says Rappaport. “We are so gratified by the welcome that we’ve gotten from the city, the art community, the art world writ large.” Rappaport adds that it was “an accident of timing” that so many art institutions emerged in new forms so close to one another—a convergence she says that led to a feeling that “*everything* was happening at once. *Everybody* was in San Francisco.” **CL**

The lobby of the LinkedIn building, with Frank Stella’s *The Perquod Meets the Delight*, 1992, and *Riallato* (Black and White), 1994



The Artist

BERNADETTE JIYONG FRANK

Standing in her San Francisco art studio, Bernadette Jiyong Frank is surrounded by half-finished paintings that are already in demand—sought by collectors eager to own one of her *Spaces in Between* canvases. Each features atmospheric layers of thin, translucent rays, painstakingly brushed on and dried, one ray a day, to produce a kind of transcendent refraction that has turned Frank’s ongoing series into a hit.

Frank, 52, only became a full-time artist in her mid 40s, after a career in marketing and design. Of Korean descent, she was born and raised in Japan until age 13, when she moved with her family to the Bay Area. She didn’t know she was ethnically Korean until age 10. The “in-between-ness” that Frank paints references both her upbringing and the Japanese concept of *ma*, the space between two structural parts.