

HOT SUMMER GUIDE 2023

Your Guide to the Bay Area's Best Art Exhibitions This Summer

By Sarah Hotchkiss  May 22, 2023 Save Article

Be sure to check out our full [2023 Summer Arts Guide to live music, movies, art, theater, festivals and more in the Bay Area.](#)

This summer, all cross the Bay Area, our exhibition spaces are presenting work both hyper-local and international in scope. There are vibrant retrospectives, natural soundscapes and off-the-beaten-path project spaces to explore in June, July and August. The result: shows that testify to the artistic talent in our own backyards, as well as the power of art to psychically transport us. Happy art viewing!



Marilyn Wong, 'Untitled,' 2022. (Courtesy of the artist and Creativity Explored)

'Into the Brightness: Artists from Creativity Explored, Creative Growth & NIAD'

Oakland Museum of California

May 19, 2023–Jan. 21, 2024

The Bay Area is blessed with not just one but three incredible institutions that work with artists with developmental

disabilities, and the visual art that comes out of **Creativity Explored**, **Creative Growth** and **NIAD** can take any number of forms, including sculpture, painting, video and wearable art. The pandemic **hit these collaborative communities hard**, when shelter-in-place required administrators and instructors to get extraordinarily creative to keep their artists in touch and well stocked with supplies. In the aftermath of that effort, it's only fitting to celebrate all three organizations and their talented artists in OMCA's largest gallery.



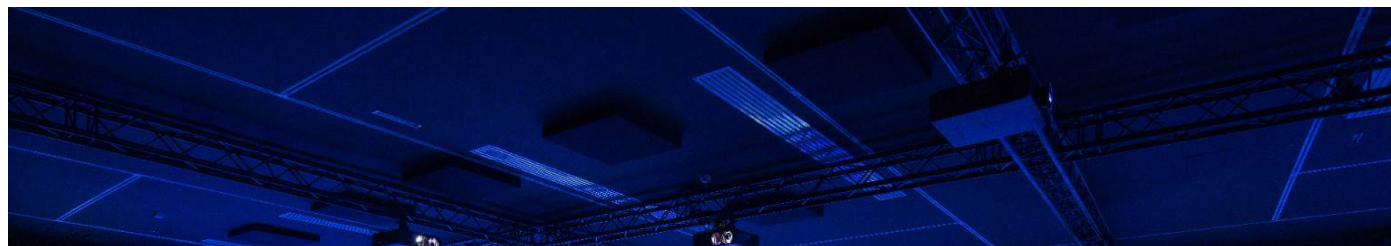
An example of Caitlyn Cherry's previous work. (Courtesy of the Wattis and The Hole)

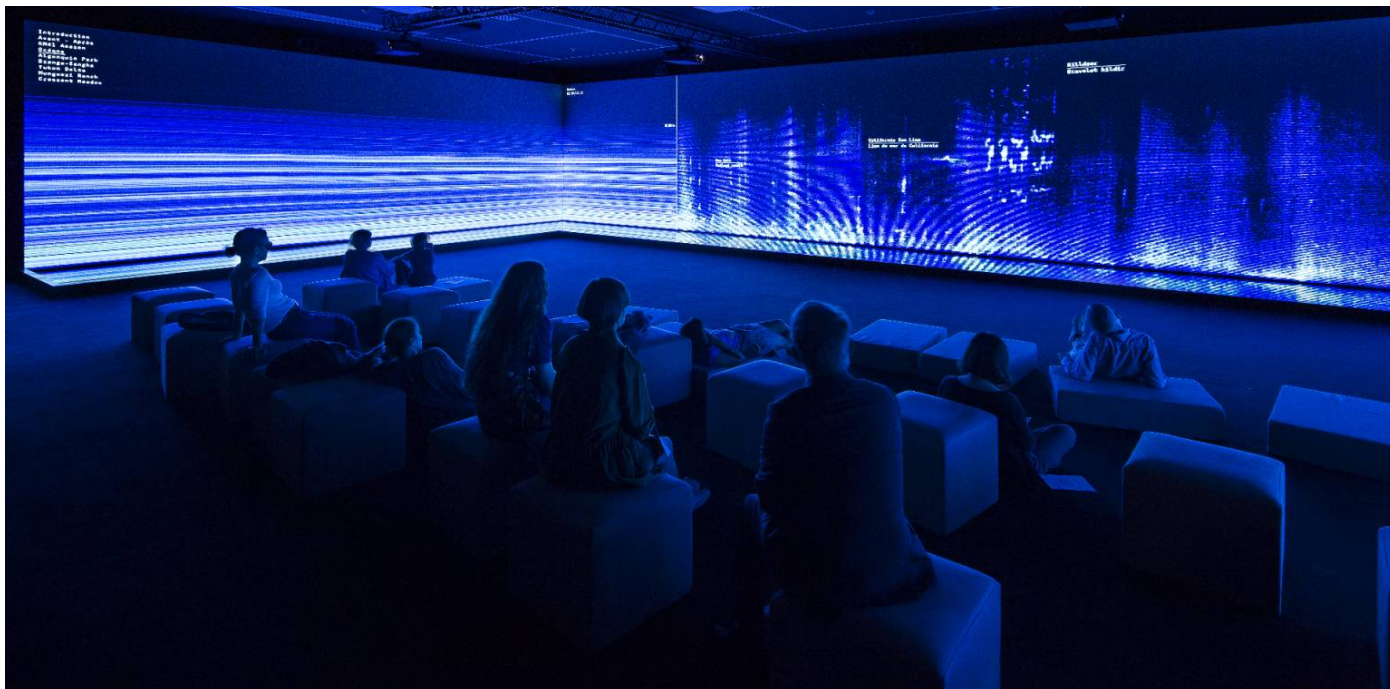
Caitlin Cherry, 'The Regolith Was Boiling'

CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Art, San Francisco

June 1–July 29, 2023

It's not often that we get to see paintings at the Wattis. Curated by former director Anthony Huberman, this solo show from the Mérida-based artist **Caitlin Cherry** will respond to the space with large-scale oil paintings and digital prints in an installation imagined as a single mural. Having multiple parts cohere into a whole befits Cherry's painting style, which draws from image databases across the internet for pics of porn stars, Instagram models, drag queens, rappers and celebrities. In the artist's hands, composite scenes are rendered in electric, solarized hues and Black femme figures are overlaid with psychedelic ripples of color. Expect maximalism, creative methods of display and a welcome retinal onslaught.





View of the exhibition 'The Great Animal Orchestra' at Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris, 2016.
(© Bernie Krause / © UVA; Image © Luc Boegly)

'The Great Animal Orchestra'

The Exploratorium (Pier 15, San Francisco)

June 10–Oct. 15, 2023

Sonoma County resident Bernie Krause has been collecting the sounds of the natural world for over 50 years, recording across North America, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, even dipping his microphone into the world's oceans. In 2016, Fondation Cartier introduced Krause to United Visual Artists, a London-based collective, to create a video installation that kinetically depicts the sounds of seven different marine and terrestrial habitats. Howls, chirps, songs and clicks each tell a story of a vastly different place on this planet — a mesmerizing collective chorus that is sadly, and ever more rapidly, losing its members.



'Memorial portraits of actors Nakamura Utaemon IV, Ichikawa Danjuro VIII, and Bando Shuka II,' 1854; Woodblock print, 14 3/4 x 30 1/2 inches. (© 2023 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

'Hell: Arts of Asian Underworlds'

Asian Art Museum, San Francisco

June 16–Sept. 23, 2023

You know you're in for something special when an exhibition bears the tagline "800 Years of Torment." This show gathers artworks from Buddhist, Hindu and Jain traditions created over nine centuries. In these elaborate and grotesque visions of the afterlife, humans hang over open flames, demons torture men and mice cower before despotic cats. (I knew it!) I predict it'll be tough to drag people away from the twisted worlds depicted in these pieces, a real *Where's Waldo* in the underworld, if you will — so it's a good thing this show stays up all summer.



Gordon Parks, 'Untitled, Harlem, New York,' 1963; Archival pigment print. (McEvoy Family Collection; Courtesy of and copyright The Gordon Parks Foundation)

'What are words worth?'

McEvoy Foundation for the Arts, San Francisco

June 16–Sept. 2, 2023

Curated around ideas of language, journalism, literature and typography, this exhibition will be the final show for the McEvoy Foundation for the Arts, the Dogpatch nonprofit arts space that opened in 2017 and announced it'd be closing earlier this year. Since that first show, the MFA has put on nearly 100 exhibitions, film programs and events, including an incredible [Isaac Julien installation](#), a [program of experimental films](#) once shown on KQED, and a memorable screening of Jafar Panahi's *The Mirror* at the Roxie. There will be much more to say once this show puts its own words on the wall, but don't miss a chance to say goodbye to a program that has created space for so many art experiences in its brief time.



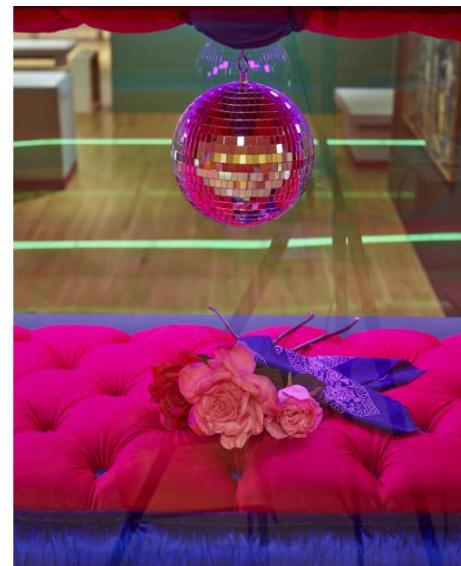
Yolanda López, 'Runner: On My Own!' from the series '¿A Dónde Vas, Chicana? Getting through College,' 1977; Oil and acrylic on paper, 60 x 106 inches. (Courtesy of the Yolanda López Legacy Trust)

'Yolanda López: Portrait of the Artist'

San José Museum of Art

July 7–Oct. 29, 2023

Just a month and a half after Yolanda López **died in 2021**, the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego opened her first solo museum exhibition. Even though the Bay Area artist, activist and cultural worker was long ignored by the institutional art world, her work in oil pastel, paint, charcoal, collage and photography became Chicana feminist symbols and potent images of the Chicano civil rights movement. This SJMA show is a homecoming of sorts, bringing 50 of López's iconic works together with material that speaks to the Bay Area's impact on her life and career — and, in turn, her influence on the generations of artists in her orbit.



L to R: rafa esparza, 'Corpo RanfLA: Terra Cruiser,' 2022; Mario Ayala, 'Reunion,' 2021; Guadalupe Rosales, detail of 'Drafting on a Memory (a dedication to Gypsy Rose),' 2022. (L to R: Courtesy the artist, photo by Fabian Guerrero; © Mario Ayala, courtesy the artist; Courtesy the artist, photo by Chad Redmon)

'Sitting on Chrome: Mario Ayala, rafa esparza, and Guadalupe Rosales'

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

Aug. 5, 2023–Feb. 19, 2024

While SFMOMA's **free entry** to its second floor galleries ends May 29 (with the close of the **SECA Award show**), the museum just announced a "**Working Artist Membership**" that makes the cost of admission a little less staggering for artists planning to make multiple visits over the course of a year. And here's a very good reason to do just that: a collaborative exhibition from Los Angeles-based artists **Mario Ayala**, **rafa esparza** and **Guadalupe Rosales**. In a series of installations that include murals, paintings, sculptures, photographs, archival materials and sound, Ayala, esparza and Rosales use the visual language of lowriders to talk about cultural resistance and visibility in sparkling, pinstriped, sensational style.



A vinyl floor sticker by Fred Marquee DeWitt. (Courtesy the artist and Berkeley Art Center)

'Rabbit Hole'

Berkeley Art Center

Aug. 12–Sept. 23, 2023

This group show curated by Adrienne Ramsey looks at the changes we've experienced when it comes to our understanding of space, especially after the shelter-in-place mandate eradicated the group gatherings that so often give us our strongest sense of community and self. Working across a variety of mediums, artists Danielle Luz Belanger, Fred Marquee DeWitt, Mark Harris, Courtney Desiree Morris, Arlene Correa Valencia and Connie Zheng will negotiate the yurt-like Berkeley Art

Center — a strange and lovely space unto itself — to depict their own experiences of falling, like Alice, through the rabbit hole from “before” to now.



The forthcoming Vallejo project space dubbed Personal Space, expected to open this summer. (Lisa Rybovich Crallé)

A great time to visit new spaces

While **gallery closures** can be cause for hand-wringing, the Bay Area is full of people who simply cannot stop creating community-minded artistic projects. This summer, make it a priority to visit some of these more off-the-wall efforts.

For example: Why not swing through the Mission for a show at **In Concert**, nestled within Cushion Works (an active cushion factory) and alongside **Cushion Works** (an alternative exhibition space)?

House of Seiko's Inaugural Show Revels in Subtlety and Process

Just a few blocks south, you can catch up on **House of Seiko's** fishbowl-like space and have a nice chat with co-founder Cole Solinger.

In the Richmond District, be sure to carve out time to visit **Staircase**, an apartment hallway turned graceful exhibition venue.

Before you leave San Francisco, drop by **La Mofeta**, open all the time because it's a 4-by-4-inch post sticking up out of a garage in Diamond Heights.

Later this summer — July, she says, maybe August — artist Lisa Rybovich Crallé will open **Personal Space**, a storefront project space in Vallejo.

And last but not least, sign yourself up for the mailing list of **Pointing Respectfully**, sporadic, joy walks in local nature organized by Zoë Taleporos and Elizabeth Nicula.

Care about what's happening in Bay Area arts? Stay informed with one email every other week—right to your inbox.

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